Soviet Literature

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VERA PANOVA

FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

Chapter VIII

Reminiscences

(concluded)[1]

In the autumn of 1942, the German army reached Stalingrad, and there began that great battle which for five months was followed with breathless suspense throughout the world.

At first it was a suspense of fear—that the Germans would break through to the Volga. Then came the dawn of hope that perhaps they wouldn't. And after that—the sure confidence that this was the boundary which the Germans would never cross, the starting point from which the Red Army would begin driving the enemy westward, liberating Soviet territory from the invader.

Now, when the train was running empty, Danilov would gather the people twice a day—morning and evening—to discuss the latest communiqué, and the centre of discussion was invariably Stalingrad, everything else took second place. In all the coaches where he could find room for it, Danilov put up a board for cuttings from the papers. Stalingrad was in all minds and hearts, it was a synonym for hope, for the approach of the glorious end, the dawn of a new day.

The men who were fit for active service left the train, called up for the front. But Danilov was not summoned, and remembering the reply he had received to his application to the Central Party Committee, he kept quiet.

The girls began volunteering for army service, and many of them started learning how to use rifles and machine guns.

Danilov was not in the least surprised when Lena Ogorodnikova volunteered, but when he came across the signature of fat Iya among the packet of applications, he whistled in amazement—after all, a year ago it was she who had been crouching in a shellhole, half dead with terror. . . .

He liked listening to the conversations in the train, he preferred it to talking himself. People were accustomed to the commissar coming in, sitting down silently, listening to the talk for a minute or two while he awkwardly rolled a cigarette (he had only recently begun to smoke) and then rising and going out.

"He's sick of everything," said Sukhoyedov. "Sick of us and sick of our talk. Look at him, he's still a young man, he wants a bit of scope."

"And who isn't sick of it?" somebod asked.

But they were wrong; he found them mo interesting than ever.

Julia Dmitryevna was talking to Supru gov, as she unravelled some knitted garmen and rolled the wool into a ball.

"Well, anyway," she said, "we've stoppe them. Remember Pskov? Our resistance wa a very different matter then. Remember There were our units retreating right befor our eyes. . . Yes, you were the first to poin it out to me. . . But now you can feel tha we're going to win this battle. This is ev dently the end of their march. I can jus imagine what must be going on there no in the streets and houses. . ." There was note of annoyance in her voice as she spok of not being in the streets and houses Stalingrad.

Kravtsov's conversation was the mos interesting of all.

"There's David," he said to Nadya. "H began as a shepherd, and when he was jus a bit of a lad he killed the giant Goliat with a stone out of a catapult."

"What sort of catapult?"

"Well—a sling, the sort boys sling stone with. And for that the Jews made him thei tsar."

"Their tsa-ar? Did the Jews have tsars then?"

"Good lord, what a fool you are!" sighe Kravtsov. "Don't know anything more tha twice two's four. . . ."

A moment's silence. Then once more Krav tsov's voice took up the tale:

"They had some famous tsars. They wer tsars and prophets and writers and judge all at the same time. Thousands of yea ago David wrote words that lift your hea up today. He wrote: 'Truth shall be th weapon.' Can you understand that much It wasn't a howitzer that was to be you weapon, but truth. And he himself kille Goliath with a sling, as though he was ac mitting that the howitzer might be neede sometimes, but at the same time he sai 'Truth shall be thy weapon.' Put it anoth way—without the truth and howitzers yo won't get anywhere. And another time I said: 'Peace be thy realm.' It's not in w we can find happiness, but in peace. B war—it's the road to peace. . . Oh, what the good of talking to you!"

[1] See *Soviet Literature* No. 6, 1946.

"At our school," said Nadya, "one of the ds almost put another one's eye out with sling. . . ."

When Danilov was fifteen years old, a outh League group was formed in the vil-ge where he had been born and lived until ien.

A thin young fellow in huge boots dubbed tanks" arrived from town in the post cart, athered all the lads and girls in the school uilding, talked long and enthusiastically, nd then began signing up those who wished join.

Danilov signed up, not so much because e realized what it all meant, as in defiance the mothers who had gathered outside ie windows and at the door and kept call-ig: "Mishka! Tanka! I've told you already come on home!" Some of them whispered, me called out loudly, and Danilov was roud that his own mother was not among iem. On arriving home, he announced:

"Well, I'm in the Youth League!"

"And went just as you were," was his iother's only comment. "Wouldn't have urt you to put on a new shirt. What must iat fellow from town think of you?"

Neither she nor his father ever again inter-ered in his affairs. They were quite sure that ieir own steady, honest, hard-working life id given their son an example, and that he ould never dishonour either himself or them hatever path in life he might choose.

At home, a courteous, considerate attitude everybody, quiet, sparing talk and hard ork was the rule. Danilov could not re-ember that his parents had ever drunk, uarrelled or been idle. His father had a small nithy; he was a pious man, but even on aster Sunday he would put on his work othes and go to the smithy if anybody rought him a horse to shoe.

"God doesn't disapprove of work," he would ay.

He was carpenter and saddler, he could ake fishing nets and was the best reaper n the district. In the old days he had hired imself out to the gentry at reaping time, nd when he was old, he would put on a clean hirt for haymaking, shave, sharpen his cythe and go to reap for the state farm. le was an artist at the job, and liked to see is work admired.

Danilov had spent more than half of his fe far from his parents and saw the old man ery seldom, but he always retained his love work and liked to do it so that responsible eople would say: "Good chap!" A valuable eritage. . . .

His mother had taught him to cook, mend cks and wash clothes.

"It'll be useful on military service!" she id.

When he had still been quite little, his other had sometimes caressed him, but as grew older she stopped doing it. He never membered her kisses, never had any spe-l prayers said when she died, but to the d of his life he honoured her memory.

The Revolution came, with its new words d concepts. He joined the Youth League, t there was little change in his life—the lage was ninety versts from the railway. s life changed only when the old village schoolmistress retired on a pension and a new one arrived.

The new schoolmistress was called Faina; she was quite young—barely twenty, and pretty, with thick braids that she wound round her head in a coronet.

She demanded a new cottage near the school, and when the village Soviet would not hear of it, she went to the district authorities, who sent an order that the cottage be provided and a club organized there. On returning, she brought with her two packing cases full of books and began reading them aloud in the school in the evenings.

At first only her pupils came to the reading, but later on, adults began dropping in, even quite old people. They liked the way the schoolmistress read—they had never heard anything like it before. She would begin reading quietly, bending to catch the light of the paraffin lamp, her shoulders stooping under the shawl thrown over them. She would read calmly, even indifferently, but then the sense of what she was reading would carry her out of herself, her face would light up, and the young eyes would glow under the lowered lashes. Absorbed, excited, she would read now loudly, now almost in a whisper; she would throw off her shawl and kneel on the chair, her glowing cheeks supported on both hands. Sometimes, when the listeners sighed in sympathy for the sorrows of another's life, tears would glisten on her own eyelashes, roll down her cheeks and fall upon the open book. . . .

For the first time Danilov saw how rich, lovely and magnetic a human being can be. He could not tear his eyes from this wonderful person. He wanted to be like that, too. He realized fully that much was needed for this—look at the way she read, never stumbling over a single word, using different kinds of voices for different people. Everything funny became still funnier as she read it, and the sad bits were so sad that you wanted to cry. . . Well, and what of it? She was older than he, she had learned a lot, learned things that he had not had time to learn yet. But who was she, after all? A simple, ordinary person, just like himself. Her felt boots were patched, and her shawl was just like the one his mother wore. She had studied, and look what she was like now, he thought. He would study too, and be as she was.

"And she herself was stately as a peacock," she read in a musical singsong. . . "And when she spoke, it was like the music of a stream. . . The moon gleamed beneath her braids, and on her brow a star burned."

"And you're the queen of swans," he thought in rapture. "You're the stream, you're my star. . . ."

Faina distributed books among the Youth League members, and told them they should be "book-hawkers", and Danilov went about among the cottages persuading the people to read. Then Faina announced that an amateur dramatics group was to be organized, and began rehearsing some play, from the old days, with princes and barons. There were fewer lads than girls in the group, and the girls did not want to play men's roles. So Faina herself took the part of an old prince, a tyrant and murderer, a feudal

lord, so as to set an example. She found some tow and made herself a long beard, like the ones in pictures of Jehovah, but at the last minute she hated to disfigure her face with it, and drew a little beard and moustaches with burnt cork. The result was that the old prince looked much younger than his own daughter, a weepy widow who wanted to go into a monastery, and much sweeter and more feminine than all the young counts and princes. And he was the one whom the audience liked best of all, and they showed it by applause and stamping, despite all his wicked deeds. . . .

Danilov was eighteen, a tall, broad-shouldered fellow with strong arms, a head taller than Faina, with a fresh, fair complexion and a faint down on his upper lip.

For some time his strength had been becoming a burden to him, his own body was a load. At times he would fall into fits of brooding, at others, he would be wildly gay. Suddenly his mother began talking about marriage, said that her strength was failing, she probably had not so very much longer to live (she was troubled with a gynecological disease, the reason why she had no more children after Ivan), and would like to have a good daughter-in-law in the house to look after her a little and close her eyes at the end. A daughter-in-law to whom she could hand over the home with an easy mind. Of course, it was early for him to marry yet, he could easily wait a couple of years, but it would do no harm to have his eye on a suitable girl now. . . He suddenly interrupted her with unexpected boldness, smiling angrily.

"Who are you hinting at?"

He knew well enough who it was—Dusya Kasatkina, the miller's daughter. Everybody was teasing him about Dusya, saying she was dying of love for him. What had she wanted to pick on him for? Why should he marry her, either in two years or ten?

His mother was offended, both because he had interrupted her so rudely, and because of the word "hint".

"I'm not in the habit of hinting, thank God," she said. "But I'd have you know that she's refused two suitors because of you. She's a good girl, and a good worker."

He picked up his cap and went out of the cottage.

"Where are you going? To the schoolmistress?" burst from her, and then, as the door banged behind him: "Eh, deary me!"

And it was to the school that his feet took him. The village was wrapped in the winter dusk. For some reason the schoolroom window was dark, whereas usually the lamp would be burning in the large classroom. . . Had she gone away, maybe? His heart seemed to turn over. . . .

Young folks from the Youth League met him as he approached, and told him that tonight there would be neither rehearsal nor reading, the schoolmistress was ill in bed. He listened, and then went on. To *her*. They called something after him, but he did not listen. His lips were trembling.

He entered the porch with its trampled snow underfoot, walked along the dark corridor, past the empty, dim classrooms, and opened the familiar door without knocking.

Faina was lying on the bed, fully dressed face to the wall.

"Who's there?" she asked in a startle voice.

"It's me," he answered.

"Vanya Danilov? What's the matte There's no rehearsal."

"I know. I just came to see you."

Why had he come? Wasn't it because h wanted to say: "I don't wish to marry. I don want anybody but you. I want to be wit you. Let me always be with you!" And no he had come and was standing at the do like a post, feeling that if she told him go the bitter tears would overflow. . . .

It may be that she understood.

"You startled me, coming in like that she said. "I was dozing. I had some drea or other . . ." and she stretched luxur ously, with a little sound of enjoymen "Light the lamp. It's on the table. The ma ches are on the shelf. And take your cap o won't you ever learn. . . Those village ways

He took off his cap and lighted the lam feeling awkward, insignificant and in no wa interesting to her, but never thinking going.

Faina sat up on the bed and began pinni up the disordered hair at the back of her hea She wound her plaits round her arm li snakes, holding her comb in her teeth. H arms were bare to the elbow—firm, roun working with swift, sure movements. S was wearing absurd stockings, striped r and blue, with a small rosy toe peeping o from a hole.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" s asked, her voice dim with sleep. "Wh have you come for—to look at me? Sit dow you're in my light." He sat down. She p her feet in the worn-out felt boots and went o

And so he sat, and dared not move, conte ing himself with the pleasure of looking her room.

He had been there before, but always wi the other young people, and not for long a time, and it had always happened that stood at the back and could not see anythi Now he was here alone, and everything v in full view.

It was a small room with log walls, a narr bed covered with a thin flannel blanket bookshelf over the table and washing thi in the corner. All these objects were poor a impersonal, but for Danilov they had a p cious and important life of their own—wit those walls *she* breathed, here *she* slept, h washed herself, at that table *she* sat corrected exercise books, she had turned pages of those books, read them. . . dearest and most interesting were the things which were evidently her own pers belongings and gave him a glimpse into inner world—there on the wall, that p tograph of an elderly man in a Rus shirt and jacket in a polished frame v bronze corners—that must be her fat although he was not like her. And there a thimble, her thimble. And what c she have in that box with the gilt ro Thread? Needles? Ribbons? There was grey shawl thrown over the back of a ch and there, on the hanger, the pink bl that she wore on holidays. . . Dear obj

as tender and significant as she herself. . . He sat there as though bewitched, looking with all his eyes, listening with all his ears to her talk, and left only when she told him straight out that it was time to go.

It was already late. When he emerged onto the street there was not a light to be seen, and the only sound breaking the deep silence was the dripping of water somewhere. He looked round: there was still light in her window.

What did she do when she was alone? He went to the window and peeped cautiously in. She was sitting at the table, her cheeks supported on her hands, lost in thought. What was she thinking about? . . She rose, reached out to the window, the white curtain fell to, the light faded—Faina had put out the lamp. . . .

Danilov went home. He would have liked to walk for a long, long time through the empty streets, thinking about her.

After that he began coming every evening. She did not stand on ceremony with him, she would push some book into his hands, while she busied herself with her own affairs, correcting exercise books, reading, darning stockings, or sometimes going away somewhere, while he sat there like a sentry.

If anybody had asked him just why he sat there, he would have said:

"Because I enjoy it."

If anybody had asked him if he wanted to kiss her, he would have been horrified. He had never even taken her hand.

One time when he came she was not at home, and the old woman who looked after the school building told him that she had gone to the bath and would be back soon. He went into her room, lighted the lamp, opened a copy of the *Niva*[1], and waited.

She came rosy and gay, smelling warm and clean, a towel wrapped round her head like a turban.

"Oh, you're here already!" she said. She raised her arms, unwound the towel, flung her head back and shook it, the heavy wet strands of hair falling over her shoulders and back.

"Comb it, Vanya," she said, holding out a comb to him.

Obediently he began combing the cool, slippery, heavy locks; he took them up, and his hand sensed the heavy wetness of them. His fingers tangled in the soft, silky strands, and for some reason which he could not understand he found that they were trembling.

He was standing behind her, as she faced the mirror. He could see her face in it, filled with gaiety and mischief. . . He dropped the comb, put his arms round Faina's shoulders, bent her head back, and kissed her full on the lips. And she responded to his kiss—responded! But in the same instant she broke loose from him, laughing angrily.

"Now, now, boy!"

He never remembered how he found himself out in the street again. He had forgotten his cap, he went without it, lost and confused. Boy! Of course, he was a boy, a fool of a boy, an impudent boy, how had he ever dared! . . Yes, but why had she laughed at him? Why had she told him to comb her hair? She'd done it on purpose. Why had she responded to his kiss? He had felt it, he could still feel it, how tenderly, how tenderly her lips had moved beneath his. . . She has responded to his kiss on purpose, so as to laugh at him afterwards! No, no. Her eyes had sparkled, she had kissed him, kissed him!

"What's the matter with you, are you drunk?" his mother asked quietly and sadly.

He said nothing but hurried to the room where his bed was. He did not undress, but sat down, his arms embracing his knees, his burning forehead resting on them. That was how he finally fell asleep, just before dawn, but even in his dreams her grey eyes glowed before him and her soft lips stirred gently beneath his.

In the morning one of the schoolboys brought him his cap. He trembled as though it had been a letter from Faina, instead of just a cap.

He would go to her! . . But shame stopped him. . . How would he go in? What would he say? She would laugh, and what would he do . . . stand there silent? Look at pictures? He was tired of saying nothing and looking at pictures, he wanted to kiss her, he wanted to be with her always, beside her, in her room!

In the evening he would see her in the club and would tell her that . . . if his courage did not fail him.

That evening was appointed for the opening of the club. Danilov was late because, do what he might, he could not find the words for what he wanted to tell her. . . He did not even go there to nail up the curtains and hang the posters . . . all the other Youth League members were there, but he did not go because he was afraid to meet her.

When he entered the room, the formal meeting was in progress. Faina was sitting on the presidium beside the chairman of the village Soviet, with a stranger in town clothes on her other hand—a man who had come from the regional executive committee for the opening ceremony. There were speeches, applause.

Danilov clapped with the rest, but he understood nothing, he only saw Faina's free, proud bearing, saw her whispering with the man from town, saw how lovely she was—and nothing more. He tried to catch her eye, but she never even so much as glanced at him. After the meeting there was dancing, benches were pushed to the walls, the accordion player expanded and contracted his instrument, and the couples circled the room. . . Danilov had finally made up his mind to approach Faina when he saw that she was dancing with the man from town.

Danilov did not know how to waltz. He stood there leaning against the wall, watching the pink blouse whirling round the room. . . He was agitated, oppressed, tormented. . . .

Could it be that she had cut him off—completely and for ever? Was it possible that there was no way of making things right again? . . Now she was leaving the room, arm in arm with the man from town. Should he follow her? But pride, shame whispered—don't go. He hesitated for a few minutes, and when he finally ran out to look for her she was no longer in the club.

She had gone away with that fellow in the

[1] An illustrated magazine.

jacket—right in front of everybody—where had they gone? A paroxysm of rage swept over him, everything seemed to go black before his eyes. He clenched his fists. . . Where should he seek then? He dashed outside—not a soul there, nothing but stars and frost; the whole village was at the club. He dashed towards the school, saw it before him—and stopped dead. There was a light in her window—she was at home, then. For a second his rage abated at the sight of that lighted window which had always held such peace and happiness for him. She had felt tired and had gone home. "My heart's delight was tired, and she's going to bed. . ." He went up to the window.

Faina was standing with her back to the wall, leaning lightly against it. Her head was thrown back, her face seemed that of a stranger, the lips parted as though in fear. . . The fellow from town was sitting on the bed, smoking and talking. Then he rose, went to the window, his hand came out, the white curtain fell to and the light went out as the lamp wick was turned down.

The light went out.

Danilov was crying. Hot tears coursed down his cheeks, but he felt nothing of them. A thick white icicle hung near him. He seized it, snapped it off, and running a little distance away, hurled it through the window. . . There was the crack of breaking glass and a cry—Faina's voice. Danilov took to his heels.

As he ran he wept. All was over. Farewell love, farewell Faina, farewell dreams!

The next day it was common talk in the village that when the schoolmistress was coming home from the club she had fallen and cut her face—not badly, but there would probably be a scar on her cheekbone. The women were all sympathy, what a pity if it spoiled her looks. She was very popular.

"Why don't you go away somewhere, Vanya, for pity's sake," Danilov's mother suggested. He said nothing. There was nowhere for him to go. He went to work felling trees and spent more than a month in the forest. He worked with fury, trying to exhaust himself and drug his suffering. If he could only tire himself enough, he could fall asleep anywhere, wherever he might be. "You're a glutton for work, Ivan!" the wood-cutters marvelled. But then a message came to him from the League group . . . the League district committee had asked them to send someone to the Party school, and they had decided on Danilov. He well knew who had had a finger in that.

He went to see her before leaving—he had firmly made up his mind that this was the end, but there was no reason why he should not go to say goodbye. It was late in the evening when he came to her room, she was sitting at the table correcting exercise books. She must have recognized his step as he came along the passage, but she did not jump up, her gaze was level, and the strong hand with a pen between the fingers lay easily on the open books. . . She looked him straight in the face, calmly and coldly. He came closer so as to see her better, and saw a small, pink, star-shaped scar on her cheekbone—his mark, she would never forget him. . . She asked him nothing, and he said no word, but after standing a moment, turned and went out.

The next day he left the village.

He had all the natural shrewdness of a peasant lad who has grown up in a decent family. He was young and in love, his heart was open to passion. He was troubled by dreams, by the sun's warmth, by women's voices. But his clean-minded common sense saved him from cheap attractions.

"I shall marry, of course," he thought at times. "But I've got to wait a bit, study and grow up, make something of myself. And suppose *she* should change her mind—send for me? . ." His heart burned with the crazy idea; one thought of Faina seemed to give it wings.

But the idea became more and more hopeless, came less and less often, and at last ceased to come at all.

He had forced it from him.

At first he had been a fool—oh, what a fool he had been! He had suffered, been torn by regrets, waited. . . He asked his mother to write how the schoolmistress was, was she still organizing and leading groups, was she married. And his mother told him—right up to the day of her death, blaming but pitying her son, she wrote all that she knew of the schoolmistress: she was alive and well, teaching the children, running groups, not married—who was there in the village for her to marry? Then she wrote that the schoolmistress had been sent for by the regional executive committee, she was going away to the town; everybody was sorry, they were collecting money to make her a present. . . He was beside himself, even went twice to the executive committee to try and find out where she was, but at the last minute awkwardness and shame turned him back.

Then his mother wrote that the schoolmistress had been on a visit, given a lecture and afterwards had been at their home and told them that she was married, asked where Vanya was and sent greetings. . . .

It was then that he *commanded* himself to forget her. It was still difficult, but possible—little by little he put her from him, became accustomed to the thought that she was not for him; gradually the memory of her, of the perfume of her hair, became fainter, and all that had been became like some dream from the far past. But the main thing now was that he was graduating from the Party school and would be going to serve his time in the army; he thought continually of the life before him and prepared for it in every way, he felt it as something very important and responsible. . . .

Nevertheless—suddenly, without any warning, he would see her before him, radiant, clear and vivid as ever—the lines of her throat, her laughing mouth, the wet strands of hair clinging to her temples and shoulders—"Come it, Vanya. . ." But time passed, he grew, became a man, a worker, and the vision began to come very, very seldom. . . And thank God for that!

He served two years in the Red Army, and during that time he read a great deal, especially books on political subjects, and joined the Communist Party. When he was dem

ilized and returned home, he was elected o the district executive committee and made ice-chairman. After that he had to undertake ll kinds of work—in the Party, in the local oviets, in agriculture and industry.

There was no trace of Faina, she had gone way somewhere in the east with her husband, nd now another woman was beside him—is wife.

He had married the miller's daughter, Dusya, after all—not just to please his moth-r, it had come about of itself soon after e was demobilized and began working in he regional administration. Even while e was still in the army he had felt that he ught to marry. Now he occupied a prominent osition, and he wanted to live in such a way hat he would be respected, that no kind of oolishness could distract him from his work, which was the pivot of his life.

One time when he came to visit his father e met Dusya. She was standing by the well, rning the creaking handle as she drew up he bucket, and flushed as she saw Danilov oming. He greeted her, asked how she was. She was now twenty-five, the same age as anilov, not particularly pretty, but fresh nd healthy; but the main thing was that er blue eyes fastened to his face held such shy gladness that he was touched. "She'd ake a good wife," he thought.

In the evening he visited the miller, and week later he was in the village again, athered up Dusya and her box with all the arefully folded frocks and blouses—collected ver long years for her trousseau—took her o the district town and directly to the regis-ry office. From there she went straight to is apartment and began housekeeping—ooking dinner, washing the windows and haking out her clothes in the yard to rid hem of the smell of moth-balls, while he went to the district executive committee, where there was urgent business waiting for him.

That was how they lived—he worked, went to meetings, and travelled, while she kept house. Their relations held nothing of all that he had felt for Faina, his heart never beat faster, he never felt himself drawn to her with that sweet force that had drawn him to Faina, never once did he hurry home so as to see Dusya sooner. When friends came to visit him, he sat at table, the master of the house, talked to the guests, and pressed food upon them, while Dusya handed things round. He liked to have everything clean and shining in his home, he liked to find a hot dinner waiting for him, whatever time he might get home. Dusya tried to have every-thing as he wanted it, and to spread out his small earnings so that they should cover everything—good food, good clothes, some-thing to offer guests. . . .

Sometimes his conscience pricked him when he saw how hard she had to work, and those pricks made him angry with her—as the cause of it.

"Why must you break your back over that washing, as if you were a charwoman?" he would say. "Send it to the laundry."

"But they always spoil things," she would reply, thinking within herself: "Yes, the laundry. It would take sixty rubles to have all this done and then the money wouldn't last out till pay day, and where'd we be then?"

At first he used sometimes to say:

"You'll have to study. You don't know anything. Whatever happens, you must study." But within him he would be thinking: "And when can she find time for study? Busy with housework from morning till night." And she thought the same.

Nevertheless, he was sure that she ought to be very happy. After all, he thought, if a woman has the husband she wanted, how can she fail to be happy? He saw how glad his rare caresses made her, and that confirmed him in the feeling that she was a very happy woman.

On big holidays—the anniversary of the October Revolution and May Day—everybody would go to parties at the place where they worked. Danilov always took Dusya with him, she would put on her best dress, have her hair waved, and spray herself with eau-de-cologne. Then he would take her in, find her a seat and go away to talk to more interesting people. He never once asked himself whether she might be bored at these parties. Everybody brought their wives, and he had brought his. She was no worse dressed than others, everybody spoke to her, the wife of one of the leading people. So everything was all right.

But his son—that was another matter. His son—that was he himself, Danilov, his seed, his spirit, his eternally burning masculine force. He gave the boy his own name, Ivan. A grand woman, his wife, to bear him a son.

She had borne him all right, but the boy belonged to him, Danilov, wholly and entirely, even to the amusingly shaggy, reddish eyelashes which he had scorched at fire. After all, what was a mother's care? Washing him and feeding him. But he, the father, was creating a new life, a fine, spacious life for his son. And to make a smooth, bright path for their sons' lives, they, the fathers, were prepared to build it with their own bodies.

During the night a blizzard rose, and wet snow beat against the compartment windows.

The train was circling about Moscow; sometimes it would race ahead at full speed, with lamps and some kind of blue lights flashing past the windows, while whistles sounded; then it would halt and stand in the darkness, who could say where, whistling dismally through the storm. They always had to wander about like that, until some Moscow station could take them.

Circling, circling, everybody does the same thing, and he was doing it too. He would complete his circle honestly. The main thing—to go through with it honestly. Wasn't that right, Sonechka?

Those whistles seemed to go right through his heart.

A large snowflake was clinging to the black glass of the window. When he was small, he had had a book with pictures of snowflakes, of all forms, on a black background. It was just as lovely as those, that one which had just flown onto the glass.

He vividly remembered that book and

the picture, and the ink blot on the border of the page. His sister had added arms and legs to the blot, and their mother had scolded her—what nonsense is that? His sister was grown up, a student at the Bestuzhev Courses.

His sister was dead. His mother had died still earlier.

Everybody was dead.

Dr. Belov drew the thick curtain and lighted the lamp. A glass of cold tea stood on the table. There was always food standing on the table; he had asked them not to put it there, but they still kept on doing it.

Today they had left him in peace, gone off somewhere, and the whole evening he had been alone. In the ordinary way, there would always be somebody hanging about in the compartment—probably Ivan Egorych purposely sent people to him on all sorts of errands.

A dear fellow, Ivan Egorych; but did he really think that talking about work would make the doctor forget Sonechka and Lyalya?

Alexander Ivanych had written that the house no longer existed, there was only rubble and stones. It was not only they who had met disaster, but their things, their clothes, the table where Sonechka had worked, Lyalya's school exercise books which he had cherished, the letters, the diary—all were gone.

Only memories left.

They could not be written down. Once there had been a girl, she had gone to school, she had done well there. Her exercise books were filled with even, clear, beautiful writing, and the teachers' marks: "Excellent", in red pencil. The girl had grown up, her father had collected her exercise books and put them away, so that she could remember her schooldays when she was old. The Germans had dropped a bomb on the house, the house fell, and there was no girl, no books.

There was nothing.

How can one write about that?

The table was small, and covered with white oilcloth. Upon it stood chemists' scales, a large glass jar with plaster of Paris and a white porcelain cup in which Sonechka mixed the plaster. For almost thirty years that table had stood there, with the scales, the jar and the cup. When she was working, Sonechka had worn a blue overall, old, no two buttons on it alike, one button was even taken from a pair of trousers. How can one write about that? It makes no sense, just confusion—what have trouser buttons to do with it all?

He must be going mad. Sonechka had been his friend, his truest and dearest. For thirty years they had been together, and never a single quarrel. . . How she had looked after them when he or either of the children was ill—she would sit up with them all night. . . .

But his memory obstinately seized on the small things, as though trying to collect them all together, letting nothing slip.

Sometimes he recalled how he and Sonechka had gone home after their wedding—in a simple drozhky, because they could not afford a carriage. Sonechka had been wearing a white dress with a high lace collar and a medallion hanging from her neck on a thin gold chain. She had taken off her veil in church, after the wedding. "It looks silly on the street," she said, "everybody would stare." The initials of her maiden name had been engraved on the medallion—S. K. He said that now it ought to be S. B., but she replied: "I won't change it—that belonged to my mother."

Sometimes he recalled their life in 1919. He was sent to the country, where a typhus epidemic was raging, spent four months there and then caught the sickness himself. When he recovered, he was sent home to recuperate. He brought Sonechka flour and butter—everybody said he ought to do so—and felt proud of being so practical. Things were very hard at home. They had a small iron stove which they heated with old magazines; there was no electricity, the drain from the kitchen sink was blocked up so that all the dirty water and rubbish had to be carried down from the fourth floor to the yard. Sonechka carried it down herself, she would not let him help her. One day this made him angry—was he a child or an invalid? See how stout he'd become after his typhus, he was strong as a bull! And he picked up the bucket and walked off with it. It was dark on the stairs, and somebody coming before him must have spilled some slops which had frozen; his foot slipped, he fell and the pail rolled noisily down the stairs, spilling everything. He began looking for it, but in the darkness and confusion could not find it. The door opened, and Sonechka appeared above him with a candle in her hand. She came down unhurriedly, said only: "Yes, of course," found the bucket and began wiping down the stairs with a cloth. His job was to hold the candle. . . .

My darling, I was never able to do anything for you. . . .

She had not much time for housekeeping because she always worked, and that sometimes led to amusing contretemps. One day she set some dough to rise and forgot about it, busy with somebody's teeth. The dough rose, pushed up the lid of the pan, and overflowed onto the table and the floor. It was Lyalya's birthday, and her friends had been invited to tea. "Oh, never mind about it," said Sonechka, bought some prepared dough in a shop, and the cakes were ready on time.

He had never been able to give her good clothes. She took all the money he received and spent it on the housekeeping, on the children, on him, and went about in old things. It troubled him sorely—he had always heard that women attached great importance to clothes, and thought that she must suffer at having nothing nice. One day he held back some of his money, and went to buy her a present. He had wanted to get a silk dress, but it turned out that it cost more than he had, so he began searching for something cheaper. He had never been in ladies' shops before, and his eyes were dazzled by the endless buttons, handbags and handkerchiefs. Finally he bought a pair of gloves, beautiful kid gloves with embroidered gauntlets (the saleswoman told him that they were gauntlets and very fashionable

He thought that the gloves were very small, he was even afraid that she might not be able to get them on, but Sonechka laughed, thrust in one hand, and it appeared that they were far too big, it was just that the fingers were pleated, so as to make them look smaller. . . It was a hard blow for the doctor. Sonechka forbade him to buy her any more gifts and gave away the gloves to somebody for a birthday present. . . .

For thirty years he had dreamed of taking a boat trip with her down the Volga, of getting a good, comfortable cabin and letting her forget all about teeth and children and the house, and really rest—she was far too thin. He wanted to look after her, anticipate her wishes, let her feel how dearly he loved her, how much he wanted to do everything for her peace and happiness. At home he was not able to look after her, the children took up all their time, Sonechka was always busy, and if he wanted to help her, she would say: "Leave it alone, Nikolai, I'll see to that." And it always ended in her doing everything while he only hung about and hindered her. It was she who got wood in, she who saw after house repairs and redecorating. . . .

"This summer I'm certainly taking you down the Volga," he would say every spring. But when summer came, it would turn out that the most sensible thing was to spend it in a summer cottage at Pargolov or Tarkhovka, cheaper and simpler, that Igor had diathesis and could not be left, or that, he, the doctor, needed a new winter overcoat and there was no money to spare for the Volga.

So she never gave him a chance to look after her.

Perhaps she never knew how he loved her? He had never been good at talking about his feelings. He was absurd, he knew it well, people often laughed at him, and with reason, but she had always been so tender and considerate. . . .

Clutching his whitened head in his hands, he thought how terrible it was that it was not he, a man, called up to the war, who had given his life for what they both held dear, but they, peaceful women, so gentle and gay, so. . . .

"My dear ones, my sainted ones, what could I do, I'm always with you, my own. . . ."

PART III

DAY

Chapter IX

Julia Dmitryevna

Julia Dmitryevna's feeling for Suprugov was of a strength and magnitude that she had never before experienced.

Suprugov was the first man ever to seek her company. At first it was because Danilov was offhand with him, Faina frightened him with her advances, and the others, although they laughed at his stories and jokes, turned away indifferently when they ended. In Julia Dmitryevna's presence he felt more confidence in himself, he saw that she was always sympathetic and kindly disposed towards him, although he had no idea of the reason. At first it was simple friendship, and then suddenly, after his mother's death, he began to think—why should he not marry her?

Marry? . . There was something attractive about the idea.

First of all, the housekeeping. . . After all, it was better to have a woman in the house, and not have to worry about dinner, cleaning, washing, all those details like socks and ties. Live an intellectual life. Not have to go to the eating-houses: undignified for a doctor, and the food there was nothing to boast about.

He recalled his flat, the painted boxes and jugs, the rose-pink venetian glasses with their rainbow reflections, and his heart contracted—charwomen would pinch everything.

And after all, a man ought to be married.

And after all, there were plain women who if they were well dressed. . . H'm, just imagine her all dressed up!

But to make up for that she evidently liked him. She was very sensible, and a good housewife. She would worship him. . . .

But would she?

If one took into consideration that she was an old maid, then she ought to be eternally grateful and devoted to him for marrying her, if one considered that. . . .

But something told Suprugov that as soon as Julia Dmitryevna was married, she would be making demands of her husband that he, Suprugov, would find it difficult to carry out.

"She'd expect me to be interested in social questions," he reflected. "Not so difficult to make a show of it, and I wouldn't have anything against that, it gives you a certain standing and prestige. . . But she'd want me to be really interested in it all, and I'd have to pretend that I was, and give up my whole life to it. . . She'd want to have a child and she'd have one, too, whatever I could put forward against it. Of course, she'd give a solid base to my life, because she'd got a wonderfully strong, masculine character, but wouldn't it be too strong and too masculine? Wouldn't she crush me entirely with that strong will of hers? There'd be order in the home, but it would be her kind of order, and all I could do would be to submit without a word. It's delightful when a wife's on her knees to her husband, happy to anticipate his wishes. But can I imagine Julia Dmitryevna in that position? Of course not, there'd be no question of my being the head of the house. . . ."

Nevertheless, he hovered under the wing of that strong and direct spirit in which he sensed a protector. To do him justice, it was not Julia Dmitryevna's looks that caused him to hesitate, for although he of course could see how extremely unattractive she was as a woman, he could also see the deference, almost timidity, with which she was generally regarded on the train, and it flattered him to feel that this proud, authoritative woman, respected by everybody, was taken up with him, Suprugov, that she liked talking to him and evidently enjoyed his company. It was the first time that any serious type of woman had shown any interest in him.

He told her, laying it on thick, about his hard, hungry youth, of how he had loaded barges in his student years and ruined his health, how he had later been valued and his practice had grown, how he had built himself a comfortable nest, and his late mother—God rest her soul, as they say—had never looked after him but kept running out of the comfortable nest to waste his hard-earned money on card games, and he had always really been very lonely, very. . . .

"I hope," he said one day, "that my loneliness will not be for ever. I am almost certain that it will soon end."

Her heart trembled at that empty phrase. . . And when another day it came into his head to describe his apartment and even draw a plan of it, she thought: perhaps I am destined to live in that apartment?

She could conceal her worries from everybody else, but not from Faina, who had a quick instinct for a romance, even with only trifles of evidence to go on, and regarded it with the utmost benevolence. It was true that Faina was angry with Suprugov for not paying any attention to her, and there was no other woman whom she would have permitted to stand in her path, but not to stand in the way of Julia Dmitryevna was such a humane act that Faina, an arrant poseur, now saw herself as the guardian angel of this love which was in process of being born. In order not to impede the course of the romance she began finding every excuse to leave the compartment when Suprugov visited it, so there was nobody to disturb Julia Dmitryevna's talks with Suprugov when the train was running empty. True, the compartment door was always open—both of them were careful of that, and Julia Dmitryevna first and foremost. She cherished her reputation.

New people appeared on the train.

Danilov needed a carpenter, a man who could do all kinds of fiddling jobs—fastenings for stretchers, back-rests, small, delicate apparatus for remedial gymnastics. Another thing Danilov wanted was small hanging cupboards for the krieger coach, one for each cot—movable cupboards which could be placed at any distance from the wounded man's hand, where he could keep his tobacco, books and other trifles. And in the hard coaches it would be a good thing to have stools between the sleeping shelves, instead of small tables.

"If only the Lord would send me a carpenter," said Danilov.

At Ivanovo station the Lord sent him Boguchov, Uncle Sasha.

Uncle Sasha had been a conductor on the railway, while his family had lived in Luga—his mother, wife, widowed sister, two daughters and a young niece. Uncle Sasha used to refer to them as "my six women." When the Germans approached Luga, Uncle Sasha left with a train taking evacuées, and brought his six women into the same train. He was not able to arrange for them to be in the first coach, where he was conductor, so he delivered them over to an old friend of his, a splendid fellow, who was conductor of the last coach. On the way the Germans bombed the train, the last two coaches were hit and not a single person was saved. Uncle Sasha helped to pull the dead out from under the wreckage: he found his six women and his old friend, the splendid fellow. . . Uncle Sasha was ill for a long time. He was in the mental asylum in Ivanovo for nearly eighteen months before he was discharged as cured, and it was there that Danilov picked him up.

Uncle Sasha set up a tiny workbench in the isolation coach and set to work. He had lively, merry ways and a delicate touch, just what Danilov wanted. First of all he made various kinds of apparatus for physical training—for exercising the legs and the fingers. All this he did in his free time, since the regulations did not provide for a carpenter on a hospital train, and officially Uncle Sasha was conductor in the dispensary coach.

Uncle Sasha had evidently recovered from his grief in the mental asylum, for he never spoke of the past, and nobody ever saw him sad or downhearted. The only thing was that he had to be doing something all the time; if he was idle he would become restless and his hands began trembling. . . When he was on duty, sitting beside the stove in the furnace-room of the dispensary coach, he would knit stockings—which he had learned to do in the asylum.

Uncle Sasha could sing, and had probably once had a very pleasant tenor, and although it was now roughened and weak, he could still tackle the high notes with verve, his whole body taut and the small face with long whiskers flushed crimson. After a drawn-out note, Uncle Sasha would strike a chord on his guitar and smile all over his face, as though to say: "See that, now!" It was only the old songs that he sang—*Now Oleg Goes into Battle*, *The Fire of Moscow Flamed and Roared*, *My Campfire*. When he began singing *Oleg*, the listeners would gradually steal out of the coach, for there was no end to the song.

One day Danilov heard him singing.

"You ought to sing for the wounded," he said. Uncle Sasha caught him up at once.

"Yes," he said, "the army boys enjoy listening to me on the stations, I even had a success with the higher officers. There was a lieutenant-general who gave me a hundred cigarettes for *The Fire of Moscow*."

After that, when treatment was finished and supper began, Uncle Sasha would put on a white overall over his padded jacket, comb his whiskers, take up his guitar and go visiting the coaches.

It would be difficult to analyze the secret

of his popularity, but of the popularity itself there could be no doubt. He would place a stool in the middle of the coach, seat himself upon it and begin *My Campfire Shines Through the Mist*. "This knot which you tied on my heart, Who will untie it tomorrow. . ." he sang, shaking his whiskered head sadly, and nobody laughed. But when he left to pass on into the next coach, he would be followed by shouts:

"Uncle, sing something else! Don't let him go, make him sing some more!"

The Red Army drove the Germans from Stalingrad and began pushing them off Russian soil. It meant hard fighting, and plenty of work for the hospital train.

Further and further west the army drove the enemy, and one after another, districts which they had occupied were freed. And from these districts came such a wave of human suffering, there was such devastation, so many people without homes, so many orphans, that it stunned a person new to it.

At a steppe station where only scorched chimneys were standing and all offices had been huddled together in a hastily built wooden hut, Vaska appeared in the hospital train—a thin, haggard girl with fair braids, fine and delicate as silk, and grey eyes. It was Kostritsyn who brought her.

"Here you are," he said. "A real collective farmer, knows more about it than I do. And for regular soldiers to look after chickens—there's not an army regulation in the world that provides for that, whatever you say."

"How old are you?" asked Danilov.

"Seventeen," replied Vaska.

"Where are you from?"

"Petryayeva village. It isn't there any more."

"Ruined, is it?"

"They burned it," Vaska sighed softly.

As she replied to his questions, she was examining Danilov and Julia Dmitryevna, who was standing beside him, with her light, rather protruding eyes. Her speech was quick and breathless, as though she had been stopped in full flight.

"Got your papers?"

"Yes," and Vaska pulled out from under her blouse a carefully folded paper with the ink smudged on it, as though from tears. The paper said that in 1941 Vaska Burenko had passed her fifth class examinations at the Sagaidak secondary school in the Ukraine with honours.

"That's not a passport," said Danilov.

"What's that?" asked Vaska.

"How did you get here from the Ukraine?"

"We just came here. We wanted to get away from the Germans. And then they came here too."

"Have you any relations here?" asked Julia Dmitryevna.

"Yes," said Vaska. "My Granny. Only she's not here, but nearby, at Likhoreva, just over there across the stream, six kilometres away."

"And why have you left your Granny?"

"She's living with people she knows, but I don't want to. Their cottage has been burned, too, they're living in a dugout."

"And your father and mother?"

"I've no mother. Dad—I don't know where he is. At the front. I've heard nothing about him."

Vaska told this in the same easy tones as the rest, only her light brows drew together painfully.

"I'll take you," said Danilov. "Only one condition—tell the truth in future. You're not seventeen."

"I am, really and truly. Cross my throat and die," said Vaska.

"And how much did you tell the Germans, so that they wouldn't take you to Germany?" asked Danilov, who already knew something of how things had been in the occupied areas.

"Thirteen," said Vaska.

Danilov and Julia Dmitryevna laughed.

"That sounds more like the truth," said Danilov. "Well, and what's your name?"

"Vaska."

"Well, Vaska, then," said Danilov.

Vaska's belongings consisted of a bundle rolled in a grey checked shawl, huge man's sweater on top of her dress, and thin boots.

"What have you got here?" asked Julia Dmitryevna, pointing to the bundle. "Maybe you'd like to leave it?"

"Nay," said Vaska, clutching it to her bosom.

She was thinking—what was going to happen to her now? Would they give her something to eat before starting off teaching her how to heal wounded men? But Julia Dmitryevna took her to an ordinary goods coach. First she came into a sort of cubby hole, with two piglets behind bars, plump and clean, snuffling and chewing. "How clean they are," thought Vaska, "don't even smell of dung." Julia Dmitryevna opened a low door and Vaska found herself in a more roomy part with large bowls and rubbing boards hanging on the walls. Along two of the sides there were metal tables, and by the third something she could not understand—like a huge cupboard painted green, with thin pipes, and a large thermometer fastened to the side. A man in a white overall was standing looking at this thermometer, with his hands behind his back. "A doctor," thought Vaska.

"Sukhoyedov," said Julia Dmitryevna, "finish the overalls, call a nurse and let her teach this new girl what to do. Sit down," she added to Vaska, and went. Vaska seated herself on a stool. It was hot in the coach, and there was an acid smell.

Suddenly Vaska jolted, swayed and nearly fell from her stool. She clutched at the metal table to steady herself.

"Lord-a-mercy, we're off!" she thought.

A pile of blue quilts was lying on the table. Sukhoyedov counted them, said: "Nineteen," sighed and looked at Vaska, who decided that it was time to start up a conversation.

"Uncle," she said, "what are ye going to do wi' them?"

"Push them in there, that's all," replied Sukhoyedov, examining this unabashed girl, and thinking: "What's this kid doing here?"

"What for?" asked Vaska.

"To boil 'em."

"What for?"

"Get rid of microbes."

"They die?"

"All of 'em."

Vaska was silent.

"Uncle," she said after a little while. "Why am I sitting here?"

"Waiting your turn."

"My turn where?"

"Here's a bright spark," thought Sukhoyedov. "Knee high to a grasshopper, and perky as you please." Aloud he only said: "In twenty minutes I'll take out the overalls, and then you'll go."

"Where?" asked Vaska.

"Where! There—to the disinfection room," and Sukhoyedov began unscrewing and screwing things on the green object.

"How many degrees?" asked Vaska.

"A hundred and four."

There was a long silence.

"Uncle."

"What?"

"And if I don't want?"

"Doesn't matter if you want or not," said Sukhoyedov. "All of us have to get through that, from the doctors to the stokers."

Vaska nodded. "Well," she thought, "if they've all done it, then it won't kill me." She wanted to crawl into that green thing as soon as possible so as to see what happened there.

Sukhoyedov began to feel sorry for her.

"You needn't be frightened."

"I'm not frightened, Uncle."

Vaska was given an old overall with torn fastenings and a piece of muslin to tie round her head. The overall was too long, so Vaska took a pair of scissors, cut off the bottom and hemmed the edge, and then sewed fastenings onto the neck and sleeves. When she saw how Sister Faina arranged her muslin in a turban, she wanted to do the same, but Julia Dmitryevna told her: "Cover your head properly."

Vaska was too young to be a nurse, so she was handed over to Uncle Sasha as his assistant and pupil. The dispensary coach pleased her highly. The walls were as white as those of her Ukrainian cottage which the Germans had burned, and everything so clean and beautiful, Heavens above!

Vaska used to sit in the furnace-room, but it was clean there too, and warm. And outside it was cold, damp spring weather.

Uncle Sasha told Vaska.

"We haven't got just ordinary passengers, ours are precious ones, people who've lost their health and strength for us, and they're weak from loss of blood, they like it warm. It's for us conductors to see that it is so. But then again, we mustn't waste coal. Mind ye—keep your eye on it, open the door and close the damper, and the other way round. Ye'll learn to get over the difficulties. The ration's strict, and when the frost's hard we need six buckets a day, and sometimes seven. It's up to us to see there's enough coal."

Uncle Sasha had his own way of seeing that there was enough coal. When they arrived at a station, he would take a bucket and go off to steal some. Once the railway guard caught him and took him off to Railway Transport Officer, and Danilov had to come and get him out.

After seeing that the furnace was in order, Vaska would go and stand at the window, waiting for the washroom door to open as it often did—and then she would get a glimpse of that white paradise with palms in tubs, shining things on the walls and the mirror on the door to the surgery. Wounded men would be sitting on folding chairs or on the divan with its white cover, waiting their turn, while the radio played softly. Everything was so well-ordered and comfortable, so pleasant, so different from all the horrors which had surrounded Vaska during the occupation. . . .

The wounded men were all dressed alike in soft blue dressing gowns, and here the noisiest of them sat quietly, without smoking, turning the pages of magazines. Vaska thought that they must all be afraid of Julia Dmitryevna.

Julia Dmitryevna would come to the surgery at six in the morning, and leave at eleven at night. Vaska tried to count how many wounded came to the surgery in a day before dinner-time she had got to forty-six and then she lost count. . . Dressings began immediately after breakfast and lasted till nine in the evening.

Sometimes the door to the washroom and that of the surgery would open simultaneously and Vaska could see Julia Dmitryevna broad in her snow-white overall, her face red beneath her white kerchief and her hands equally red, her brows raised just as though she were threatening somebody. . . Or Vaska would see her bent over the operation table doing something mysterious and skillful. . .

Vaska stood there on the platform so quietly that even cross Sister Smirnova never drove her away.

After nine in the evening, the coach emptied, until only Julia Dmitryevna and Klava (lucky Klava!) were left. Metal instruments would ring in the surgery. Klava would come running out for boiling water, and there would be a burning, acid smell. Then Julia Dmitryevna, too, would emerge and Klava would be left alone. As she was washing and scouring everything, she would permit Vaska to come into the washroom and even the physical training room, and walk along the soft drugget of the corridor, but the dispensary was always closed, and Klava would not allow her to go into the surgery. Klava was too tired to answer Vaska's questions so the girl would walk quietly about the coach, looking into the mirror and stroking the hard, shining leaves of the palms.

At three in the morning Klava, swaying with weariness, would go to bed, and Vaska was left the mistress of all this magic kingdom. The surgery Klava locked, taking the key with her, but the washroom, too, was very interesting. She could lie down on the divan and look at the magazines, thinking to herself: here I am lying on a divan looking at magazines, with palm leaves over me. Anybody looking in would think—who's that girl lying there on the divan, what life she has. . . .

Vaska had a quick ear—as soon as a door banged in the distance she would jump up, smooth the cover of the divan so that nothing could be seen, and run into the furnace-room. . . . .

But one night Uncle Sasha came in to check

the temperature and caught her asleep on the divan. He did not rouse her at once, but when she wakened he began shouting and stamping his feet at her.

"What d'ye think ye're doing? Eh, you. . ." he cried, but keeping his voice down. "Wounded men sit here, and she lies down in her dirty padded coat, and leaves microbes everywhere. . . And if the political officer comes along?. . Eh, what a girl! Now don't ye let me catch ye here again!"

He did not put in a complaint about Vaska, but he began coming every night when she was on duty and Vaska stopped lying on the divan, just to be on the safe side.

Danilov was promoted to captain, Suprugov to senior lieutenant, Dr. Belov to medical major, while many of the women put on epaulettes with stars. Vaska stood on the platform thinking: "I'll have epaulettes too. I'll be theatre sister, like Julia Dmitryevna. I'll know how to do everything, like she does. If I want to, I'll learn to be a doctor too, don't worry. . . ."

Julia Dmitryevna noticed that Vaska was always hanging round the door of the washroom. "That girl's got sensible-looking eyes," she thought. One day she came into the furnace-room and found Vaska, on her knees, putting an old tin onto the stove.

"You'll burn your hands, Vaska," said Julia Dmitryevna. "What are you boiling there?"

"It's carpenter's glue for Uncle Sasha," Vaska replied.

"Be careful—it'll burn."

"No—I'll watch it."

The warm light from the stove fell on Vaska's face, giving it a transparent rose colour, and a broad band of shining gold lay over her hair. . . "Just a girl," thought Julia Dmitryevna, "a child. . . ."

She reached out and awkwardly smoothed some strands of hair from Vaska's forehead.

"Take your hair off your face," she said, as though ashamed of the caress. "Could you clothe the wounded men again after dressings?"

"Yes," said Vaska.

"You have to do it carefully, so that it doesn't hurt them, and quickly, because there are others waiting."

"I can be quick."

"Well, we'll see," said Julia Dmitryevna.

As she went away, she glanced back at Vaska; the girl was stooping over the stove, and the end of her flaxen plait had fallen into the coalbox. . . .

One day on the return journey, Julia Dmitryevna met Vaska.

"Come to the surgery," she said. "I'll try to teach you a little. Get an overall from Klava."

And so Vaska entered the holy of holies, the dispensary coach.

Julia Dmitryevna solemnly laid her hand on a round metal box, which shone like a mirror.

"That's a box."

"Yes," said Vaska.

"In the box I keep sterilized material. We sterilize it here, in the avtoclave."

"Sterilized—in the avtoclave," Vaska repeated all in one breath. Her eyes were glued to Julia Dmitryevna's fingers.

"Repeat what I've told you," said Julia Dmitryevna.

"That's a box," said Vaska at once, laying both hands on the shining lid.

"Don't touch it," said Julia Dmitryevna, "never touch anything unless there's need. Hands are collectors and spreaders of infection, that's to say, illness."

"But you touch them yourself," thought Vaska in passing, but without any sense of injury, and stored away another word in her mind—infection.

"Very well," said Julia Dmitryevna, when the lesson ended. "You can go now."

"A wonderfully sensible girl," she told Danilov.

"Really?" he asked dubiously.

He had a deep respect for the surgery and its instruments, and he found it hard to believe that Vaska could be used for such delicate work.

"What gave you the idea of taking a pupil?" Suprugov asked Julia Dmitryevna. "And such a child at that?"

"She's very interested in it," Julia Dmitryevna replied. "If she's properly taught, we'll make something of her."

"But just think," said Suprugov, "you've so little time as it is."

"It's our duty to teach the young folks," said Julia Dmitryevna, in her own level, unbending tone.

One day Vaska dropped a syringe and broke it. Julia Dmitryevna's eyes flashed, and she sent the girl out of the surgery. As she was talking to Suprugov in the evening she kept remembering Vaska—what was the girl doing now? She pictured Vaska sitting sadly before the open stove, and the end of her plait in the coalbox, and a golden band of light across her hair. . . .

"She probably won't come," thought Julia Dmitryevna.

But the next day Vaska came for her lesson as though nothing untoward had happened.

Chapter X

Doctor Belov

A year passed.

The fat squared exercise book was almost filled—the doctor's passion for his diary had returned. Like Uncle Sasha, he had to be occupied with something all the time; if he had nothing to do, all the inner force sustaining him seemed to drain away, his head would begin shaking, and memories would crowd in, rending his heart.

He tried to enter into all the life and affairs of the train, wrote about them, ran about the train driving away memories. . . But wherever he might be, beside him, there were two luminous faces, two forms that lived for ever.

There was a third figure, too—the indistinct figure of his son.

Never a letter, never a sign that he lived. Was he killed?

People had advised the doctor to write to Moscow, to a certain address, and information would be sent. He wrote, but there had as yet been no reply.

Of course he had been killed. What was he like when he died? How old was he, what did his face look like?

"We are travelling through the liberated districts of the Ukraine," wrote the doctor, "and sometimes come fairly close to the front. The Germans have lost that air superiority which they possessed at the beginning of the war, and we have very little fear of raids. We are not yet accustomed to the sight of the terrible devastation they have left in our towns and villages, and we often find it very painful. But to tell the truth, here I have come to realize the wisdom of the old proverb: even death is better in company. There has been so much suffering and loss among the civilian population in the places where the Germans have been, that I. . ." (erased) "that to me. . ." (erased). "I do not want to imply, of course, that it makes my own personal loss any easier to bear, or that it comforts me in any way, but. . . ." (erased).

"The stations are in ruins here, and in many of them there are no pumps, sometimes we have to bring water in buckets from the river or the well in order to fill the tanks. On these occasions, all take buckets and go for water, including the officers and NCO's. We fill the tanks, barrels, the boiler in the disinfection room, but all the same we have to economize with it, because we never know when we shall be able to take on more. Near Brateshki our people found a cistern which had been pierced by a shell in four places. The railwaymen asked what the devil did a hospital train want with such rubbish. Boguchov and Protassov had to take the door of the baggage truck right off in order to get it in, and then replace it again. I. E. says that as soon as we come to some place where it can be done, he will have the holes in the cistern welded, and then we shall have an additional tank for two thousand litres of water. Kravtsov has thought of fixing a rubber tube to connect the cistern with the cauldrons in the kitchen coach, which is next to the baggage truck.

"I never cease wondering at our people, their patience, their industry, their inexhaustible ingenuity. I wonder at them and envy them, and want to be like them. . . ."

The hospital train, running empty, stopped at K. . .; it was necessary to solder the cooking cauldrons. The halt would last for five days.

"I would like to go to Leningrad for a couple of days," Dr. Belov told Danilov.

"What good will that do?" asked Danilov.

The doctor turned away and said nothing for a moment.

"I think I'll go, all the same," he said at last. "It won't affect things here, will it?"

"No, it won't," Danilov answered. "Go if you want."

He got the commandant a comfortable seat in a goods wagon taking evacuees back to Leningrad, and whispered something to the head conductor, who gave up his bed to th doctor.

The wagon was heated with a small iro stove, and was warm. The doctor offered tin ned pork to the other people there, and fel awkwardly reluctant to use the bed unti they forced him to do so.

From the conversation of the head conduc tor, it appeared that the hospital train wa well known among railwaymen.

"There's been articles about you in th papers," he said. "They hold you up as a example . . . always clean, even the out side of the coaches washed and the glas shining. Remember when you were stoppe at Vologda, you were shunted onto the firs track? A general had just come, in charge o the lines, and the RTO gave orders: put tha beautiful train in front of the station win dows. . . ."

Today he found his inactivity especiall tormenting. Sleep would not come to him however hard he tried. He talked, he trie to read a novel which he found on the hea conductor's table, but the love and sufferin of the characters could not interest him. . The conductor brought him the day's *Pravd* and the doctor read it through end to end not omitting even the theatre announcement *Ivan Susanin* at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatr *Tsar Fyodor* at the Art Theatre. Every thing as usual. Life went on.

He tried not to remember that the trai was approaching Leningrad, and what h would find there, and why he was goin there. He was going for nothing. It was a imagination. Suffering had not cured hi of his imagination.

A hundred times he had pictured it to him self, he had arrived in Leningrad. . . .

In his dreams, too, he saw it. In his dream Sonechka and Lyalya were alive, the hous was standing, undamaged, they came out t meet him, laughing and talking. . . Alexa der Ivanovich had mixed everything up, h was old and busy and got confused. There wa another dream where there was no hous only a tiny little heap of ashes, and Sonechk and Lyalya stood beside it, alive, and explai ed that this pile of ashes was all that wa left of their house.

The awakening after these dreams was th worst thing of all.

No, in his waking hours, of course, he ha no hope of meeting Sonechka and Lyaly Mistakes like that didn't happen. It was a old, kindly, considerate friend who had wri ten, he himself had followed their ashes the grave. . . .

In his waking hours his imagination pi tured something else—he thought that Leningrad he might find Igor. Igor was n dead.

The doctor would arrive in Leningrad ar make his way home on foot. There was th mosque. (Sonechka had said that the minare of the mosque were like snakes' heads. Anot er time she had said that the wings of th Kazan Cathedral embraced it and raised from the earth. Sometimes, when the hous keeping got a bit too much for her, she wou say: "I'm just sick of you all!" Then she wou go out alone, go and look at the mosqu at the Kazan Cathedral and the Nev

Arriving home, tired and gentle, with dusty shoes, she would ask apologetically: "Well, how have you been getting on without me?. . ." and make tea.)

Here he would be walking along his own street, and in the distance he would see his ruined home. From another corner Igor, in his uniform, would come towards the doctor. He would be tall and slender, slightly stooping, stumbling slightly... No, in the army they would have taught him to walk well. He would be holding himself erect and marching straight ahead. They would come closer to each other. "Dad!" Igor would say, and fling his arms round him. "Daddy! It's you! I didn't know you in your tunic. . ." And they would both have tears of happiness in their eyes.

Or else. . . Igor did not have any tears in his eyes, and didn't hasten to embrace him. "Hullo, Dad," he would say, holding out his hand. The doctor would swallow down the tears which even now were rising to his throat, he would stand beside his son and they would look at the ruins of their home. It would be getting dark. "Well, let's go," Igor would say, and they would go to Alexander Ivanovich to ask if they could spend the night there. Old Polina Alexeyevna, whom he had treated for inflammation of the liver, would open the door and throw up her hands in surprise. "Good gracious, it's you!" she'd cry. "And we've got Igor here, he's only just come. Igor! Come here!" But of course not—where would another Igor come from, he'd already found Igor, there he was, with him, they'd come to spend the night. His dreams were confused, his thoughts were confused, Polina Alexeyevna had died of starvation during the blockade. And it's only on the stage that such meetings happen, not in real life. . . .

But what does happen? And is there anything at all? Or is there nothing left in the world but grief?

He finally fell asleep, nevertheless. When he awakened, it was evening, the lamp was burning, and the truck was empty. The train had stopped. The doctor had sat up on the bed and was wondering how to find out if there was much further to go, when the head conductor entered and said:

"Leningrad."

The halt at K. would be a long one, and Danilov allowed part of the staff to go out.

The girls cleaned their topboots, powdered their noses, examined themselves in their mirrors and ran off to the town to walk about the streets, look at the civilians and go to the cinema. Vaska and Iya went to the hairdresser. It was very warm there and there was a sickly sweet perfume. A grey-haired cloakroom attendant, very like Dr. Belov, told them to take off their outer things, so they obediently removed their greatcoats and sat down on two chairs.

Everything in the place was of absorbing interest, not in the least like real life. In one corner two women were sitting at a small table; one of them wore a white overall and was doing something with tiny tweezers to the fingers of the second one.

"What's that?" asked Vaska.

"Idiot!" whispered Iya. "That's a manicure."

Women, young and old, were sitting in armchairs in front of tall mirrors, which reflected their submissive faces, and their necks swathed with towels. Hairdressers—young and middle-aged—hovered round these women, scissors snipped, tufts of dark and light hair fell. One brunette was sitting meekly with some thick paste on her brow and lashes. A girl hairdresser blew on her long tongs and began winding the brunette's hair round them. Steam rose. The brunette blinked her thickly-smeared lashes cautiously and endured it all.

But what was happening in the next room was beyond everything. A woman was sitting there, with forty electric wires, or may be more, stretching from her head to the wall. She could not even move her head, only her eyes.

"What's that?" asked Vaska with the most intense interest.

"A permanent wave," Iya replied.

A hairdresser came to the woman with the wires and began to work on her head just like Nizvetsky with his board and plugs.

The woman at the table rose and began waving her hands, while Vaska admired her nails, bright red and shining like bonbons.

The brunette also rose, and Vaska was amazed to see how beautiful she was. Her hair lay on her head in tight little sausages, her lashes were coal black and curled upward, while her eyebrows—could there ever be anything so lovely?—long, reaching from nose to temples, and fine and even, as eyebrows never are in reality.

Vaska burned with a bitter envy. She wanted to be as beautiful as that.

"Sit down, girls," said the hairdresser.

Iya sat down before a mirror, while Vaska decided to have a manicure. The water in the tiny bowl was scalding hot, and the manicurist, wrestling with Vaska's fingers, hard and roughened with manual work, cut her twice so that the blood flowed, but Vaska never blinked an eyelid—other people stood it, and she could.

She regarded her bright-red nails with passionate admiration. "What lovely nails that girl's got," everybody would say. "Just look at those nails!"

She sat down before a mirror.

"Permanent?" asked the hairdresser.

Vaska wanted to assent but Iya interrupted.

"We'll not have time for a perm., we've got to be back in an hour. Have a wave."

"A wave," Vaska whispered.

The hairdresser put all her heart into the work. She liked these girls in military uniform, she kept questioning them as to who they were, where had they come from and where had they been. Other customers joined in, and the conversation became general, even the manicurist and the old cloakroom attendant taking part. Only the woman with the wires was silent, peering out from the neighbouring room like a spider.

"Eyebrows, girls?" asked the hairdresser, and before Vaska had time to more than nod, she had seized a razor and shaved off nearly the whole of them.

"Oh!" gasped Vaska. "Isn't that too thin?"

"You like them broad?" asked the hairdresser. "We'll make them broad, then."

At last the delightful procedure came to an end.

"There's a six months' guarantee," said the hairdresser, looking affectionately at Vaska. "Don't worry, dear, they won't wash off and won't burn off, nothing will affect the . Wear them and enjoy them."

Vaska and Iya paid, put on their greatcoats and set off for the station, followed by hearty good wishes.

Danilov was walking up and down by the train.

"What in the world's that?" he said as his eye fell on Vaska.

On her fair, freckled, childish face, thick black brows stretching from nose to temple seemed to leap out and hit the eye. They made her face look older, lugubrious and menacing.

"Been to a beauty parlour?" asked Danilov, seeing the curls peeking out from under their caps and sniffing the eau-de-cologne. "Well, a wave—that's all right. But as for those—wash them off."

Vaska stood to attention.

"Permit me to report, Comrade Captain," she began with a short-lived formality, "they won't wash off and they won't burn off, not if you try ever so."

"I'll wash them off!" said Danilov. "They'll come off for me!"

"Nay, that they won't," said Vaska.

The doctor said goodbye to the chief conductor, climbed out of the wagon and went home.

From Nevsky he turned off along Liteyny, from Liteyny along Pestel Street, past the Mikhailovsk castle, across Marsovo, past the Suvorov memorial over Kirov Bridge onto Petrogradsky—the route he had travelled so often in his day-dreams.

If anybody had asked him how Nevsky looked and what he had seen on Liteyny, he could not have told them. He had noticed nothing, he even passed the mosque unseeing.

The light increased as he approached his house.

That was the house... But it was just the same as it had always been! Ah, yes, he remembered, he had been told that plywood camouflage was used so that the ruins should not be so painfully visible, and the streets would have something of their normal appearance. The house had been painted on plywood, it looked quite as usual. But actually, it wasn't there....

He couldn't go inside.

He went out into the middle of the stree in order to get a better view of the hous painted on plywood; suddenly a faint, dizz feeling overcame him, and when he came t himself he was sitting on a trunk in the por ter's lodge. The porter, a woman, was stand ing over him, saying:

"Sofia Leontyevna ought to have bee able to see him, what a fine young man he' grown, God give him long life."

The porter seemed to know him, but h could not remember her at all, and said so

"But I'm Washday's sister, don't yo remember?"

He remembered Washday, but he coul not remember ever having seen this woman her sister. She continued talking, but at firs he could not take in what she was saying Suddenly it began to dawn upon him and h rose, but his knees buckled under him.

Igor had been there a month previously he had sat here in the porter's lodge and ask ed Washday's sister all about how his moth er and sister had died. He had shed tears and told her nothing about himself, onl asked question after question. He had aske where his father was, but she had no addres He had written a note and left it there case his father should come; he had left not with all their friends whom he had foun he said.

"Where's the note?" asked the docto Her sister had put it away, the woman sai but she was at work, she was on the nigh shift and she should soon be home. An finally she did come, not at all soon, after hundred years, but she came, very old, b alive and working. And her daughter Lid was working too, she said, and was marri and expected a child... For another hundr years Washday searched for the note whi Lida had taken to read and pushed awa somewhere, then she found it, it was in th doctor's hand.

"Father, where are you? Are you aliv I want you to be alive," he read, and then few more words and five figures—the fie post office, his son's address, the army a dress, a living address.... I'm alive, Igo We're both alive! We'll finish our job a then we'll meet again. All right? I'm aliv my boy, I'm alive!

Chapter XI

Lena

The whole time in the hospital train, everybody was studying. Julia Dmitryevna conducted courses among the sisters in the use of surgical instruments and complicated bandaging. The nurses attended lectures given by the doctors. Sister Faina worked for a month at a hospital, specializing in physiotherapy. Sister Smirnova went to a course in remedial gymnastics. Fima, the kitchen maid, was sent to a cookery course, returned with a good certificate, and was made cook the former one had not pleased the wounded.

Lena liked the light, well-made appara for the remedial exercises, and she soon lea ed from Smirnova the simple principles the work. She had more success in remed work, too, because, as a former sports structor, she was familiar with the secrets a possibilities of the human body, of wh Smirnova was ignorant.

"Ogorodnikova's become much more serious," said Julia Dmitryevna.

Lena smiled to herself—she was just the same as she had always been.

Nobody could handle the wounded men as she could, and if they got one with a specially difficult temperament, he was put in Lena's charge; she would keep him quiet.

"What do you do to make them so tractable?" the nurses asked her.

"I don't know," replied Lena.

She would talk to a man to make him forget his pain, ask who he was, where he came from, what school he had been at, and about his family. There were plenty of things you could ask a person. If they cried she stroked their heads, kissed them and comforted them. When they were capricious, she did not irritate them, but tried to do all they wanted, and joked with them until they laughed too. . . .

She was promoted to junior sergeant, and put on her epaulettes with the same gay satisfaction with which she had once pinned on sports medals.

"Eh, Lenochka, you're getting older!" said fat Iya sadly.

Lena looked into her tiny palette-shaped mirror—yes, there were lines round her eyes—where had they come from? And she was pale, that was because she hadn't enough air and was out of training; after all, since childhood she had been used to doing exercises every day.

Never mind, it would soon all be over, she'd get into training again, teach the children, win prizes in competitions and love Danya, love Danya!

There had been no letter from him.

Soon the war would end, the Germans were being thrashed on foreign soil now, in Poland, the train was going abroad for wounded. Those damned Germans, why didn't they hurry up and surrender? Well, let them get thrashed and thrashed again and again, for breaking up her life.

One day she came very near to believing that Danya was dead. Why was that? Because the weather was very dismal and depressing, the rain was pouring down for the fourth day running, and they had had to put on the lights during the daytime. Everybody was feeling depressed and then suddenly Nadya received a letter saying that her fiancé had been killed—while she was getting ready to go and see him, he had been called up and had died while forcing some little stream that wasn't even marked on the map. His comrades have written to Nadya to tell her. As she was trying to comfort the girl, the thought suddenly struck Lena like a blow—what if Danya was killed too?.. But it was only a momentary weakness. Death could never triumph over them.

Soon the end would come, and they would meet again. More and more often Lena began looking into the mirror, and one day she realized that she really was going off, losing her looks—and at twenty-five! She was outraged, she was frantic, everything inside her was screaming: I don't want to!

"That is because I am living without happiness," she thought. "I'm not only living without happiness, I'm beating down the desire for happiness, every day I'm trampling on it, pushing it further and further down. . . I can't go on like this. Comrades, hurry, hurry! Hurry up and make an end of the fascists, before I wither up altogether for lack of my happiness!"

At Julia Dmitryevna's request, Vaska was appointed nurse and transferred to the sixth coach.

Lena's coach was considered the best in the train, and Vaska went to her for advice and instructions.

A mishap occurred in the sixth coach while Vaska was on duty—during the night, blood began soaking through the bandages round the stump of a man with a shoulder amputation. Vaska, going the rounds, noticed a dark patch on the pillow, looked more closely—blood! The man was asleep. Vaska hurried to the next coach and asked the nurse on duty to run for Sister Faina, then returned, took a clean sheet and went to the man. As ill-luck would have it, he was sleeping soundly, and she was afraid to awaken him—it might disturb the others.

"Uncle!"[1] she whispered desperately in his ear. "U-u-uncle! Oh, *Uncle*!"

"What's up?" asked the man, starting up.

"Keep quiet, Uncle, don't get excited, but you're bleeding," said Vaska.

She made a tourniquet for his shoulder out of the sheet and began drawing it tight, bracing her knee against the floor and setting her teeth.

"Uncle!" she panted. "Help me a bit with your good hand."

"Well, come along then," said the man. "Let me twist it. Is it still bleeding?"

"Yes. Tighter, Uncle."

When the sisters and Dr. Belov arrived, the bleeding had already stopped, the man was lying on a clean sheet, and Vaska was eating a sweet which he had given her.

"I'm going to mention you in the day's orders," the doctor told Vaska. "You're a grand girl."

"Julia Dmitryevna taught me, and I did as she said," Vaska replied, her cheek bulging with the sweet.

The train was running empty along the southern line.

"These here's my parts," Vaska told Lena, as she stood at the window.

It was early winter, and fluffy snow covered the neglected Ukrainian fields, covered the ashes and piles of rubble at the stations—the trail of the German beast. Vaska had folded her arms like old women do—her chin on her cupped palm, the elbow supported on the other hand laid across her narrow chest.

"There'll be three oaks in a minute," she said, "they're a good bit off yet. First there'll be Sagaidak station, even if it's not there any more I know the place, I went to school there. And then nearer Yereski, our collective farm. . . ."

Somebody called Lena, and no more was said. Vaska remained by the window. The three oaks flashed by. Vaska started back

[1] The usual form of address for any unknown man among Russian children or young people from the country. In the same way the general form of address for women is "Aunt".

from the window, with a single motion flung on her sweater and shawl and dashed out onto the platform. She thought that the train would stop at Sagaidak, but it raced past the snow-covered hut which marked the place where the station buildings had been. The next station would be Yereski, the train was sure to stop there; with her own ears Vaska had heard Kravtsov say to Protassov: "We'll buy it in Yereski."

Oh, that snow, that snow, it had covered up all the landmarks—but no! There was the young poplar, it has grown in these three years, it wasn't a baby any more, but a stripling, but she knew it all the same! . . Vaska grasped the cold rail and climbed down to the bottom step. A snowdrift swept up, and with a squeal Vaska jumped down into it.

She lay where she was until all the coaches had passed her, then rose, brushed off the snow, tidied her shawl and ran to the embankment to see where the way to the collective farm lay through the snow.

She had jumped from the train because it had suddenly flashed into her mind that maybe her relations in the village might know something of Dad. Maybe he'd sent a letter, been asking where Vaska and Granny were, and they hadn't known.

Wouldn't it be grand to tell them all how she'd stopped the bleeding on that amputation case!

Vaska was missed at once—Sukhoyedov had seen somebody fall from the general coach five kilometres from Sagaidak, the roll was called and it was found that Vaska was missing.

"She told me that her village was here," said Lena.

"That's what you get for taking on children," said Danilov in disgust, but Julia Dmitryevna thought: "If only she wasn't killed!"

The train stopped in Yereski for nearly two hours—Danilov purposely dragged out the halt, expecting Vaska to come. "She'll return," he thought, and at the end of the second hour she appeared, smelling of apples and snow.

"Well?" said Danilov. "Been home?"

"Yes, I been there," she said, smiling gaily. He had not the heart to scold her.

"Everything all right?" he asked.

"All right, they're alive," said Vaska untying her shawl and going off to put away the fruit. "They're living in a dugout, but not so bad . . . gave me some apples. There's been a letter from Pa, he sends his love, he's been with the partisans!. . ."

The three old men, Sukhoyedov, Kostritsyn and Protassov on the other side of the partition were having a leisurely gossip, sitting side by side, as though on their gate-bench at home. Nizvetsky, his face parchment-yellow from his illness, his eyes dark and sunken, was lying on the seat opposite them.

"Now take me," rumbled Protassov. "Joints swollen, see, and fingers in knots. And the veins. Just look here. What sort of veins are those, life's not worth living with them."

"Why not?" asked Sukhovedov. "Ye can live with them all right. Sclerosis, that's what ye expect with age. Drink iodine instead of vodka, and ye'll live to be a hundred."

"No," sighed Protassov. "Our labours'll be over as soon as things begin to get in order again after the war. I'll retire on a pension, and that'll be the end of it."

"It's all right for you," sighed Kostritsyn. "Both your sons are all right, you'll end your days in peace as a granddad. But mine came home without an arm, and there's four children, all got to be brought up."

Nizvetsky groaned softly.

"A rotten illness," said Kostritsyn. "A bitch of an illness—worse than bombs. . . ."

Lena was fortune-telling with a book of Lermontov's poems, opening the book and putting her finger on a verse with her eyes shut.

"Why should we seek your dreams to know?
"'Tis not far that we see you here."

Nothing suitable there.

The second time she got:

"Forget?—But God gave no forgetting,
Yes, and forgetting he'd reject."

Very far indeed from what she wanted.

The train arrived in V., and Lena went out onto the platform to post a letter and get some fresh air. She was still using the address which her husband had given her at the beginning of the war.

The station had been wrecked, the buildings stood without roofs or windows, skeleton buildings. Everything was grey and cheerless; it was neither winter nor autumn, an unpleasant drizzle filled the air, and underfoot the ground was a thick, sticky paste. . . .

Lena strode on, hands in overcoat pockets, her cap pushed onto the back of her head.

A troop train had arrived, and the soldiers were spilling out of the coaches onto the platform. "Coming with us, kid?" a broad-shouldered, red-cheeked soldier called to Lena in passing. She smiled at him, and his white teeth flashed in an answering smile as he ran past without stopping. . . .

"Danya!"

He was caught up in the hurrying stream of uniforms and did not hear her—she was a long way away, but she had recognized him. How? She had never seen him in an army great coat and cap with earflaps. His face had darkened, coarsened, his walk was like that of hundreds of others with him, but nevertheless she recognized him the moment her eye fell upon him.

"Danya, Danya. . . ."

She was laughing quietly from happiness. He was coming to her, she stretched out her hands. . . He took them, pressed them. She felt awkward about kissing him, with so many people all round. . . Was it possible that she had come to feel strange with him? She took his head in her hands and kissed him.

"You here?" he said.

"Yes," she said faintly, gazing radiantly intimately into his eyes. "You're alive!"

"I'm alive," he replied. "And it's a pretty good piece of luck, considering all the tight spots I've been in . . . Sergeant," and he nodded at his epaulettes. "What do you think of that. . . ."

"That's my train," she said.

"Yes?" he said. "And we're going to War

saw. We're going to take it. How are you getting along? You've got thinner. . . ."

"Danya," she said. "I don't want to talk. I just want to look at you and listen to you. . . Look at me. Why didn't you write?"

"Didn't write?" he said. "I've written. It probably never reached you." He fell silent, looking at her with a shade of worry. "Think of meeting like this, Lenochka. . . ."

"You're alive!" she said, stroking his face. He moved it away slightly.

"Don't Lenochka. . . ."

She noticed nothing, happiness had made her blind.

"I'm laughing, do you know why? I don't. . . Dearest, look, they've all gone, is it time now already?"

"Yes, now," he mumbled and began walking towards the train, Lena by his side. "A shame, didn't have time to get any hot water. We've got a stove, but it's easier to get it at stations. . . ."

"I'd only just posted a letter to you," she said, her eyes fixed on his face. "It would have been better if I'd given it to you. Do you get my letters?"

"No," he said. "That is, of course I do. Just now I don't even know what address will reach me. . . ."

They were standing beside the truck. Two officers were standing in the doorway, smoking and looking down at them.

"I love you!" Lena said loudly, embracing him and reaching up to kiss him.

"Lena!" he said. "I don't want to deceive you." He took her by the elbows, and pressed them apologetically. "Forgive me. It just happened, you know. . . ."

She stared at him. She could not understand what he meant. What did he mean about deceiving? What was she to forgive?

"It happened," he continued in a low voice. "It must have been fated so. . . The stars. . ." He smiled awkwardly. "I met a woman. Don't be angry with me, Lenochka, these things happen without our wanting it, you know. . . War, it divides some and joins others. . . Of course, you keep the room and everything," he added hastily, frowning in distaste.

What things? Why should she keep the room? Was he thinking that he was going to be killed?. . .

"Forgive me," he said, dropping his eyes before hers.

Understanding came to her, and suddenly her shoulders sagged.

He continued to speak, stammering.

"I've often thought—why did it have to happen that way? I don't know. Maybe we found each other too quickly, too suddenly. It was like a fever. And when we parted, it passed. . . ."

"It hasn't passed with me," she said through grey lips.

He did not hear the words, but he guessed their contents—from her eyes, the movement of her head.

"You were able to preserve it. . . ."

She turned and left him.

Thrusting her hands into her pockets, she walked with slow, heavy steps, unlike her own. She felt exhausted. Love, which had given her strength, beauty and joy, now lay heavy upon her like a cross, a cross which she would have to bear until she found the strength to cast it from her.

Chapter XII

Danilov

Danilov was no great lover of nature—it would be more correct to say that he had never thought much about it. He had grown up among fields and forests and had never noticed their beauty. He would look at the clouds, the sun, the meadows, and think: "The hay'll be good this year." He would look at the forest and think: "That would make good building material!" It was people, their affairs and their relations that filled his mind.

But on the way to Warsaw, even he could not fail to note the beauty of the forest. On either side of the track rose tall, straight pinetrees, each one with its majestic crown, as though they had been specially selected; and all laden with pure white, unstained newly fallen snow, which blanketed their broad fans, and lodged in puffs between them. "Like fairyland," thought Danilov, as he stood on the platform screwing his eyes to protect them from the glare of that silvery whiteness flowing smoothly, silently, majestically past, lovely and unsoiled. . . As the sun sank, it cast a rosy glow over the whiteness, the rose deepened, then disappeared, and soft blue shadow enveloped the forest, like a blessing bringing peace. . . The train stopped.

They had been halted by a small column of soldiers—Russians and Poles—commanded by a youthful junior lieutenant. Snow had packed on their felt boots to the knees and shaken down onto their caps. They came from the depths of that fairy-like forest, and were going to clean out some of the gangs swarming around Warsaw. The junior lieutenant wanted a lift.

"It's domestic business, so to speak," said the lieutenant. "The Germans have all made off, and left these gangs of bandits with machine guns—they took the big guns with them. The last of these bands in the Chervonny Forest were settled only yesterday."

The train was going to Chervonny Forest.

The column was accommodated in the general coach and given hot tea. They left at the third station.

Late that evening, in the heart of the forest, the train loaded up with wounded. The hospital was situated in a lonely, four-storey building built in a graceful style, without any outbuildings. Automobiles were coming in from the forest, headlights blazing, bringing

in wounded. The loading went swiftly, and within three hours the train had started on its return journey. They were not far from the front, and the men were not long from the battlefield.

"Do you know," Dr. Belov told Danilov, "in coach six there are two women, officers. One has her leg amputated at the hip. It was a terrible pity, but we had to put them in a hard coach, there was absolutely no room in the krieger."

There was no room in the krieger, because they had an exceptional number of serious cases; even the isolation compartment was filled.

On his morning rounds, Danilov glanced in at the women. They were in the end compartment, and in accordance with Dr. Belov's instructions, a sheet had been hung before it. Danilov glanced in cautiously. The women were asleep; one of them was lying almost on her face, which was buried in the pillow, the back of her head with its cropped fair fluffy hair shaking with the movement of the train; the other one had pulled the sheet up almost to her nose, her forehead was lined, her hair grey, with strands of black, and her features large and very dark. There was such weariness and grief on these heavy, sunken features that Danilov went away on tiptoe and told Vaska, who was on duty, in a whisper:

"You've got women here—don't bother them, let them sleep. Look in pretty often, but don't disturb them. I know you—as soon as it gets light you start pushing thermometers at people. . . ."

Vaska stood in wholesome awe of Danilov. She immediately sought out Sister Smirnova and told her:

"The Political Officer's been here, said not to disturb the women, let them sleep."

She told Sister Faina the same.

Neither Smirnova nor Faina had time to bother with sleeping women—they were run off their feet. It was a particularly difficult trip. All morning people had their hands full, and nobody appeared in the staff coach for dinner except Suprugov.

"I'm accustomed to order in my life," he said. "A correct regime is a guarantee for good work."

He took off his overall, washed his hands and sat down with pleasurable anticipation at the table, where the dinner was already served on the plates, which had snowy napkins beside them.

Dinner was interrupted by a knock at the door—a loud, intrusive knock. It was Smirnova.

"Doctor," she gasped in a voice quite unlike her own. "Come to coach six at once."

"What's the matter?" asked Suprugov. He had just speared a piece of roast pork with his fork, smeared it with mustard and crowned it with a ring of onion.

"The wounded woman's giving birth," said Smirnova.

Suprugov did not understand.

"How do you mean, giving birth?"

"Well, the usual way, that's how," Smirnova replied coarsely. The sight of that piece of meat on the fork, which Suprugov was holding vertically in front of him, motionless, got on her nerves. She would have liked to push the plate away from under his nose. . . . Smirnova was young and quick-tempered, and all her simple, natural feeling mirrored itself in her angry grey eyes. . . .

"The train's shaken her up, and now she's giving birth," she explained. "The one with a leg off."

Suprugov carried the pork to his mouth and followed it with a piece of bread. Tears filled his eyes . . . from the mustard.

"But see here," he said, when he had finished chewing. "There wasn't anything about pregnancy in the case book?"

"Nothing."

"And the matron—is she there?"

"The matron's in coach nine, with a man who's in a fit. They're all there."

"And Olga Mikhailovna?"

"In the krieger coach, doing dressings."

Suprugov pondered. It was always like that—if something happened, they were all busy. But what had it to do with him? He was no obstetrician. Ear, nose, throat. . . It wasn't his job to be a midwife.

"Why get into a panic?" asked Suprugov. "You women ought to know what to do in such cases."

And noting with satisfaction that Smirnova reddened, and her eyes expressed very plainly her longing to hit him, he rose and added:

"Go along, I'll be there in a moment."

But when he arrived in coach six, after washing his hands and putting on his overall he found Olga Mikhailovna and Julia Dmitryevna, whom Vaska had called, already busy there. With mingled curiosity and distaste Suprugov glanced at the woman who was giving birth. Her large body with the mountainous stomach, covered with a sheet, jerked convulsively. Her grey head with the black strands of hair rolled from side to side on the pillow.

"Scream, dear, scream!" Olga Mikhailovna was telling her swiftly and tenderly. "Don't worry about making a noise, it'll be easier for you."

But the woman made no sound. Beads of sweat rolled down onto the pillow beside her head, her bitten lips were swollen. A prolonged groan burst from her, like the strangled lowing of a cow, and her eyes in their dark sockets stared terrible from her haggard face.

"Scream just once, a good hard scream!" Olga Mikhailovna urged her. Julia Dmitryevna saw Suprugov and went to him.

"You're not at all necessary here," she said confused as a girl. "We can manage without you."

A cry sounded from under the sheet, a cry that shrilled through the nerves of all the men in the coach. The grey-haired woman had been unable to contain herself any longer.

A feeble, seven-months' boy was born, and at the first station a telegram was sent to the evacuation point at M. requesting them to send a car to meet the train and take on mother and child.

Danilov heard about all this in passing without paying much attention to it. His mind was filled with the man in coach nine. Like everything which went beyond well-defined limits, everything hard to under-

stand, this man's sickness irritated Danilov. Wounds, infection, gangrene, all that destruction which metal and microbes can bring to the human body—to all this, Danilov was accustomed. But the man who had given him all that trouble this morning for a solid two hours was not wounded. Blast from a shell had hurled him from his feet, he had not even been very much bruised, he had not lost a drop of blood, only consciousness, and that not for long. And suddenly—these fits began. It was as though some evil power had taken possession of him—his body would arch and jerk as though there were a spring in it, he would beat the back of his head on the floor, while white foam flecked his lips. And this was a man who had never previously suffered from epilepsy, his nerves had been in order, his parents and grandparents had enjoyed perfect health. It was incomprehensible. Danilov found the doctors' explanations confused and vague. If he had read of such a case, he would not have believed it, would have thought there must be something fishy somewhere. But he had seen the attack with his own eyes, he himself had talked with the man, had held his head during one of those fits and had felt the evil strength that had convulsed the body on the bed until four strong men could barely hold him down. Yes, it had undoubtedly been so, but it should not be, there should be nothing dark, senseless and evil to torture men.

Danilov returned to the staff coach at the end of the day. He refused any dinner, he was not hungry, only tired and upset. He rolled himself a cigarette and lit up, felt his agitation dying away, and his thoughts clearing. Science would learn how to deal with this foul illness too, all in good time, just as it had learned to treat tuberculosis, syphilis and gangrene. After all, there were other people in a worse plight than this shock case. If he had been given the chance to change places with that woman who had lost a leg and given birth on the way, he would probably have thought about it—and refused... And as he recalled the woman, Danilov decided to visit her.

She was lying there, covered with a quilt, shivering with cold, although it was warm in the coach. The child was not there—it had been taken to the isolation department.

"How do you feel?" Danilov asked her. Her face was in the shadow of the upper shelf, and only her eyes gleamed. The lights had not yet been turned on.

"All right."

The voice was hoarse, cracked. Danilov seated himself on the corner of the bed opposite her, by the feet of the short-haired blonde, who was rolling a cigarette with great concentration, gathering up the tobacco crumbs from the quilt with slender, roughened fingers.

"Isn't it bad for you, smoking in here?" Danilov asked in disapproval, turning to the woman who had had the child. Her large mouth curved in a smile, and the fair-haired woman said in an exasperated tone:

"I'm making it for her. She smokes all day long, and makes me roll them for her... Here!" she added angrily, holding out the cigarette to the other woman.

"I'll smoke it later on," she said, and laid the cigarette on the table, while the blonde immediately started rolling a fresh one. The woman who had given birth evidently felt cold—she pulled the quilt up over her face, covering it nearly to the eyes.

"Who are you?" she asked, never taking her glowing eyes from Danilov's face. "Are you a doctor?"

He told her.

"Have you been here long?"

"From the beginning of the war."

"And what were you before the war?"

It seemed that she was asking him questions, instead of the other way about. But it was better that way, easier to start a conversation. He answered her briefly, and then asked:

"And what was your job?"

"I?" she replied after a slight pause, shortly, curtly. "I worked in the Soviet administration."

"And your husband?"

"Killed at the front."

She evidently did not want to talk about herself, and this disappointed him.

"It'll be difficult for you with the child," he said bluntly. He had come to comfort her, give her hope, tell her that even with the child, even without a leg, she wouldn't go under, and this was what she was like—curt, prickly, asking him all about himself, and then erecting a barrier between them, as though she would say:

"What has it got to do with you?"

"Yes," she agreed. "It'll be difficult."

"Have you any relatives?"

"Yes."

"They'll help...."

She jerked out a short laugh.

"They'll help me if I go on my knees to them...."

Her laugh told him plainly that she had no intention of going on her knees to her relations. He pictured her going along the street when she was discharged from hospital. It would not be possible to fit her with an artificial leg, the amputation was too high, she would have to go on crutches to the end of her life. She could not carry the child, somebody else would have to do that. He pictured it vividly, but he could not pity her, that pity which had sent him here had disappeared. What he felt now was a deep respect for this woman and the hard lot awaiting her. Pity is too small a thing for such a destiny.

He wanted to ask her where she came from, whether she had other children, was she a member of the Communist Party, but she suddenly said in a dry, weary voice:

"Would you be so kind as to call Sister."

He realized that she did not want to talk, and rose and went out. He could hear her say to the blonde woman:

"Now I want that cigarette, Varyushka, and how!"

That night he dreamed of her—she was walking along the street with the aid of crutches, tall, grey-headed, unapproachable, and somebody followed her carrying the baby. And even in his dream he did not recognize her.

He recognized her only in the morning, at the station of M. An ambulance was waiting by the line, and two orderlies carried her out on a stretcher with her child. Danilov watched through the window of the staff coach. The woman's big arm was round the muffled shape of the infant, and her face, turned towards it, held care and pain. And in the clear light of the winter morning Danilow recognized that face, knew it through the mask which time and suffering had laid upon it, through lines and shadows and swellings, that one and only dear face with the small, white, star-shaped scar on the cheekbone. . . .

So that was how they met.

They had met and he had not known her, had sat there beside her as though she were a stranger and talked with her across the barrier which she had set up. But she must have known him at once. The more he thought about it, the more certain he became that she had recognized him. With what earnest intentness she had regarded him, had asked who he was and what he had been doing before the war. She had wanted to know what he had become, her pupil who had left his everlasting mark upon her face.

She had not wanted to tell him anything about herself, she had not told him who she was. . . .

What relief, almost joy had been in her voice when she had said: "Now I want that cigarette, Varyusha. . . "

She had not smoked it when he was there so that the match should not illuminate her face. And she had got rid of him quickly, before he found out. She had been afraid that he might recognize her, know her by some note of her voice.

He had not recognized her, he had never guessed.

How could he have guessed?

Almost a quarter of a century had passed. There was as little likeness between that stern, grey-haired woman and the former Faina as there was between Danilov and the boy for whose actions Danilov was not responsible.

That lad with the down on his upper lip and the laughing Faina with hanging wet hair . . . those were dear figures which had been left at the threshold of life. Danilov had no more of that craving, that tenderness. A quarter of a century. . . How many days and nights, how many thoughts, how many tasks. Grey hairs on his temples. . . Could a lad long for his own home, for his own corner? But Danilov did.

Chapter XIII

The Eve of Peace

It was the middle of April 1945, the last battles were in progress near Berlin, and the hospital train went to Omsk for its yearly overhaul.

Dr. Belov received a telegram granting leave to some of the personnel. He came out of his compartment, beaming until every wrinkle was like a ray of sunshine, holding the telegram above his head.

"This concerns you, too," he told Julia Dmitryevna, who was the first person he met. "Only you've all got to beg on your hind legs for it—all of you named here."

But without waiting for anybody to beg, he began reading the telegram. The people given leave included Suprugov, Julia Dmitryevna, Kravtsov and Lena Ogorodnikova.

To his great disappointment, the doctor found that some of the people given leave did not greet the news with any particular pleasure. Klava Mukhina asked him:

"And how can we both go—Julia Dmitryevna and I? Who'll look after the surgery?"

Lena declined point blank to go on leave, said that she did not want to go, and asked that Nadya be released in her place—and the doctor had been thinking that Lena would rejoice more than anybody else at the prospect of a holiday, she had been looking so tired and ill recently. . . .

Julia Dmitryevna, on learning that she had leave, reddened even more than usual, then suddenly paled and pressed her lips together with an expression of gloomy agitation. This leave would decide her fate. She would be travelling with Suprugov.

After all, he had described his apartment to her, had even drawn a plan of it; she had hidden that plan away, and sometimes took it out to look at it. . . Once he had said "goodnight" to her so tenderly, and kissed her hand. . . .

And when he learned about leave, he said to her: "Of course we'll travel together?"

For the first time in her life, a crazy hope possessed her.

This was how it would be:

(Of course, she was not particularly young she would soon be forty-four; but she had excellent health and looked much younger than her years, she had not a single grey hair and very few lines in her face. And after all, he wasn't a boy either, say what you would! And she wasn't good looking, but there were plenty of plain women in the world who were loved and cherished. She knew one who had been married four times. One very handsome doctor had almost shot himself because of her, he had tried to do it and had been restrained only with difficulty.)

This was how it would be: they would arrive in their home town together, and he would say to her. . . No, he would say it on the way, everything ought to be settled before they arrived. "My dear," he would say, "I can't live without you, be my wife." Perhaps he would add: "My companion through life," or "my dearest friend," or something like that. Or perhaps he would not add it because all that was contained in that one beautiful moving word: wife. How happy those women were who were somebody's

wife, or who had sometime been somebody's wife, how beautiful a woman's life was when she had children. . . .

Children! She passed her hands shyly over her breasts and abdomen. She would have had strong, fine children; she was made to be a mother, and she knew it.

He would propose to her on the way, and they would go straight from the station to his apartment. He would take her home. . . It would be a strange place to her, she would have to get used to it and learn to be at home there, and settle down with the neighbours, but what of it? A wife's home is with her husband.

The first day she would take him to see her family. They would arrive arm in arm, an affectionate married couple. How glad Dad and Mum would be, they had probably given up all hope of her ever marrying, and there she would suddenly arrive arm-in-arm with her husband. . . .

There were moments when she felt so sure of it all that she wanted to send a telegram home: "Coming home on leave with my husband. Julia." But then suddenly, her faith in the possibility of happiness would evaporate, her spirits would fall and she would feel weak all over . . . a physical powerlessness, almost nausea.

"It can't happen," she thought. "Nothing like that can happen to me."

But then she would see Suprugov, hear the special, significant note in his voice, catch his glance, also with a special significance in it, and his smile directed at her—and again the wave of hope would catch her up and sweep her away. . . .

She was so weary with alternate hope and depression, that sometimes she longed to go to him and ask straight out—yes, or no? But she was restrained by womanly pride, womanly shame and yet one more feeling, stronger than even pride or shame—the fear of complete loss of all hope.

She could not renounce her dreams. This was her first real feminine expectation, the first—and the last. She was forty-four. Soon she would be old. Life was passing. If Suprugov went, she would have no more hope of marriage, motherhood, of that normal life which millions of women live, taking it as a matter of course.

Vaska and fat Iya were going to V. too—they were being sent to a nursing course. Danilov sent for them for a few final words.

"You know there's all sorts of foolish people, and worse, who spread tales about nurses. Don't take any notice of them, but behave so that nobody can pick any holes anywhere. Remember—neatness and propriety in your clothes, your walk, your voice, everything. So that people will point to you as an example of how to behave. And no more of that foolishness," he added, pointing to Vaska's face.

"What can I do!" said Vaska. "If there's a six months' guarantee?"

"But somehow, it seems to me," said Danilov, "that I've seen you with those eyebrows for over a year."

"But what can I do?" said Vaska. "Hang myself, or what? I've tried to get them off with bichloride and paraffin, but nothing helps."

None of which was true—actually, she had been twice more to the hairdresser to have her brows blackened. . . .

Danilov told Sobol to give the girls a good supply of food to take with them, and in the highest spirits, with tins from medicaments instead of suitcases, they changed onto a goods train going to Leningrad.

Julia Dmitryevna and Suprugov left two days later.

"My dear," said Faina, as she said her goodbye, "I wish you all the best, everything! You can't imagine how I want it!"

Beaming, she opened her arms wide and embraced and kissed Julia Dmitryevna, who felt confused, and pecked at Faina awkwardly with her hard lips. . . .

She took her place with Suprugov in a second class compartment of an express; they would be travelling together for thirty-six hours.

If Julia Dmitryevna's feelings had not been in such a state of chaos, the passenger compartment would have struck her as being very dirty and neglected, after her own snowy hospital surroundings; the seats were dusty, the electric light was dim, the netting of the luggage rack was in holes, and the feathers were coming out of the thin pillows which the conductor brought them. But fastidious and orderly as she was, nevertheless it was all a matter of indifference to her.

It was evening when they left. Suprugov immediately began preparing for the night, and after making a few remarks to Julia Dmitryevna, fell peacefully asleep. She also lay down, but sleep was far from her. Never before had she been so close to a man whom she loved—only the tiny table separated them. On the upper berths some unknown men were sleeping—army men, to judge by the boots standing on the floor.

She lay wakeful, staring upwards, shaking with the vibration of the train, thinking how many men there were in the country, young and old, sick and healthy, and not one among them all who had wanted to share with her his man's life, his man's heart. Suprugov was lying with his back to her, she could see his neatly clipped nape and the sleeve of his striped shirt lying on the quilt, and suddenly she realized that he was endlessly far from her, that it was all dreams, mirage, woman's foolishness. She felt so unhappy and depressed that she longed to cry, but that was something she did not know how to do.

In the morning he rose unconcernedly, calmly ignorant of the fact that she had spent a wakeful night on his account. He offered her eau-de-cologne when he went to wash, prepared sandwiches for her, and talked with her so politely, so respectfully, that she glowed again. The officers looked down at them from their upper berths, sending clouds of strong tobacco smoke to the ceiling, and Julia Dmitryevna found it very pleasant. Nevertheless, she was glad when a young lieutenant-colonel came in and took them both away for a game of preference, and she was left alone with Suprugov.

He showed some confusion, complained of stuffiness and opened the door into the

corridor. "How noble he is," thought Julia Dmitryevna. "He's afraid of compromising me."

"We're running on time?" she asked, to fill up an awkward silence.

"Yes," he replied. "We shall be in V. at six tomorrow morning." He glanced at his watch. "We still have eighteen hours to go."

"Another eighteen hours of suspense," she thought. She wished the train would be late, wanted it to go on running for a long, long time, so that she could be the longer with him and her hopes.

"Shall we have something to eat?" Suprugov suggested.

She agreed, although she was not in the least hungry. Again he got out the box of provisions and again he politely and expertly prepared sandwiches for her. She ate languidly, thinking: we'll go on eating and eating, and then our companions will return, then it'll be night, we'll come home, and everything will be ended."

"Shall we sleep for a little?" Suprugov said, when they had finished eating. "There's no better time to rest than on a journey, isn't that right?"

He lay down and quickly fell asleep, or else pretended to sleep, while she sat there saying farewell to her hopes, her first and last real dreams.

How ugly her red hands were with their yellow nails. Down had seeped out from the pillow, it was all over her skirt. That humdrum daily round of an old maid's life, not needed by anybody. . . Probably those officers had been laughing up their sleeve as they watched Suprugov taking care of her. Oh, what a fool, it served her right. . . ,

Some people came past the open door, glancing in. She was afraid that they might see the suffering in her face, and tried to assume a calm, indifferent expression. But the people who glanced into the compartment only thought: "How tired that woman with the lieutenant's epaulettes looks." They had no other thought.

In the morning Julia Dmitryevna and Suprugov said goodbye on the platform.

"Are you taking the tram?" he asked.

"No," she replied, "I shall walk, it's not far."

"Shall I get you a porter?"

"No, thanks, I can manage myself."

Her voice was firm and commanding, and as he looked at her he thought: "The woman miscalculated. But she hides it well."

She was the first to say goodbye, but her voice suddenly broke, and there was almost a sob in it.

"Au revoir," he corrected her gently. "We'll soon be meeting again in the hospital train."

He kissed her hand, she snatched it away quickly and awkwardly and walked swiftly along the station platform, broad and clumsy, her heavy suitcase in her hand.

After having breakfast that morning in the train, he had reckoned up the remaining food, carefully divided it into two equal portions and put some tins and packages into Julia Dmitryevna's suitcase. There was something so humiliating in his dividing the tins and the bacon that her throat contracted at the memory of it.

Pale and gloomy, her lips pressed tightly together, she went through the crowded station square.

"Julia Dmitryevna! Julia Dmitryevna!" came a desperate call from behind her. She looked round—Vaska was flying after her in her army tunic and coal-black brows from nose to temple.

"Vaska," said Julia Dmitryevna, taken aback, "what's the matter, Vaska?"

"Oh, goodness, Julia Dmitryevna!" cried Vaska excitedly, "I've been coming here every morn to meet you. Oh what a good thing I didn't miss you!"

"Not morn, morning," Julia Dmitryevna corrected her mechanically.

"Well, morning, then," Vaska agreed. "Julia Dmitryevna, we've started learning, we began yesterday. Iya and me. And Julia Dmitryevna, everybody's 'mazed that we're so cultured and know so much, and I know more than any of them, really I do."

"Where's Iya?" asked Julia Dmitryevna.

"At the hostel. She's still asleep. We were all of us at the pictures yesterday, all the course, eh, how we did cry. . . Give me your bag, Julia Dmitryevna." And Vaska swiftly seized the suitcase.

"Come with me, Vaska." The girl's presence seemed to make Julia Dmitryevna feel a little better. "Come along home with me."

She walked along, without heeding Vaska's chatter. They came to the clean, quiet street with its parallel lines of poplars—one of the oldest and most dignified streets in the town. Every poplar, every paving stone on that street was familiar to Julia Dmitryevna from childhood. . . .

"Will your house be soon?" asked Vaska.

"Very soon now," Julia Dmitryevna replied. "Just round that corner."

A woman carrying a milk-can was standing at the corner, looking about her.

"Where does the doctor's 'sistant live?" she asked, as they drew up level with her. Julia Dmitryevna smiled. The woman with the can seeking the doctor's assistant was like the threshold to her home.

A heavy bolt scraped, the door opened, and old arms reached out from the falling sleeves of a dressing gown.

"My dear! My dear! I saw from the window—our heroine's coming, our lovely girl's coming. . . Just imagine, only yesterday Professor Skuderevsky was asking after you. . . Mitya! Mitya! Get up, our girl's come. Julinka's here. . . ."

One day Fima came to Danilov.

She had not been working in the staff coach for a long time—she was now a cook. In a very official tone she said:

"Comrade Political officer, permit me to speak to you. We who are working in the kitchen request you to take a personal interest in our future."

"What do yot mean?" asked Danilov. "Do you want me to find husbands for you, or what?"

Fima half turned away to smile politely at the jest. Then she explained.

"Here in the train we've got new qualifications and after the war we want to find work where we can use them. Olya and Ka-

ya—what do you think?—they can quite well e cooks in a dining room, I've taught them. And I. . . " Fima blushed slightly. "I, van Egorych, would like to be chef or maître 'hotel in some good restaurant."

The words she was using—maître d'hotel. . . Well, why not, good girl.

"That's a good idea of yours," said Danilov. "I'll try to help you. . . In any case, you'll get a testimonial."

"Ivan Egorych, what good is a testimonial? That's all right, of course, but if you'd do something about it officially in an organized way?"

"I'll try," he repeated.

When she had gone, he began to think. Fima was right. He ought to fix up his people in civilian life in the places which they deserved to have. There were people, of course, who did not need it—the doctors, for instance, Julia Dmitryevna, Lena Ogorodnikova, he himself, Danilov. But what about Sister Smirnova, Klava Mukhina—weren't they fit to work in some large, model hospital? Sobol could be director of a farm attached to some factory, Vaska . . . Vaska could go anywhere . . . a collective farm, a hospital, or anywhere you would—she'd do splendidly anywhere. He'd hand her over to Julia Dmitryevna—a woman with no children, let her teach a clever girl her way about. . . It would be fine if they could all keep in touch after the war. People who have travelled for four days in the same train phone each other, afterwards, and here they had been travelling for nearly four years, and not as passengers, but working together.

He had been thinking that the kitchen girls had minds as empty as their caps, and that was what they had been whispering about in the evenings—the future, what they would be in civilian life.

And what would he himself be in civilian life? There'd be enough to do, plenty. Only at home he'd have to organize life properly, not as it had been.

Soon he would be seeing his son.

In a moment he would be seeing his son. Danilov was walking along the broad street, like a desert, on the outskirts of the town. It was over a year since he had been there. A spotted cow dawdled slowly along, with an old woman moving still more slowly after it, carrying a branch which she used like a staff. Some man in an old, greasy jacket, his heels rapping smartly on the wooden pavement, overtook Danilov and turned to glance at him—a stranger. Along the ditches beside the narrow wooden pavement the ground had been dug for potatoes.

It was like a village. The pavements had not been repaired, in many places the boards had rotted, and the houses looked neglected. His house would look the same, of course, the Trust would hardly have been able to do any repairs the previous year, and Dusya could scarcely have done anything about it. Neither she nor yet the Trust had time or attention for that.

All these years she had lived alone, without him—lived honestly, he had no doubt about that, selflessly and modestly. And he had thought about her so seldom, he had hardly ever written to her. . . .

There were children playing in the neighbours' yards. His son was not among them. Whose children were they? There was a little girl, dark as a Gipsy, surely he had seen her before. They had all grown, he could not recognize them. . . .

The gate.

The gate was locked, but he knew the secret—he must thrust his hand in between the boards of the fence and draw the wooden bolt. He did so, and entered the yard.

There was nobody there. Danilov looked about him—even vegetable beds, dug and raked, young grass beside them, the path, the porch; a padlock hanging on the door.

A padlock?

For some reason, it had never entered his head that that might happen, although it was natural enough, since he had not warned anybody of his arrival. But his spirits fell.

How would that be—a padlock?

He stood there for a moment. Before the war, when Dusya went out, she used to put the key under the floor of the porch in case he should arrive before she returned. He came down to the bottom step and fumbled about under the porch, felt the half-forgotten, once-familiar sensation of damp moss. . . The key was there, in its old place, in the crack between two bricks.

That little domestic secret was like a greeting from an old friend.

Danilov opened the door and entered his home.

He stood in the small kitchen. Everything was in its old place—the table, the pot with the aloe, the tub of pickles covered with a damp cloth. It was darker in the room than it had been outside, and Danilov's eye picked out the objects one after the other.

On the table with its white oilcloth stood a glass jar with soft sugar. There was an egg-shell on a saucer. The oilcloth was old, the corners were rubbed—it had still been quite new when Danilov had left for the war. There was an inkspot on it—where did that come from? Ah, yes, his son was writing now. He had grown, and was writing with ink.

Danilov closed his eyes. When he opened them again, they were wet.

He swallowed a heavy, sweet lump in his throat, and laughed with wet eyes—his son had grown and was writing with ink!

Danilov went into the next room. Here too everything was in its place, but there was not that shining cleanliness, that order and tidiness to which he was accustomed. Instead of the white quilt, the bed was covered with a rough grey blanket. Beside the sewing machine on the table was a half-mended child's stocking, stretched over a wooden spoon. In the corner was a child's tricycle, with one pedal broken. . . There was no sense in mending it, his son had grown, now he would need a bicycle.

Danilov went out onto the porch, sat down on the step and began to smoke. He sat there smoking and thinking, with nobody to disturb him, nobody to distract his attention. And slowly, serenely, he thought of Dusya, of his wife . . . thought of her with gratitude, almost with tenderness. A star winked faint-

ly in the tender sky. A freshness rose from the earth. . . Dusya's voice sounded from the street. Panting slightly, she was saying angrily:

"If you'd been a good boy, you'd have told him: 'Don't teach me a lot of foolishness, Uncle, I don't need a catapult, and you'd do better to go to work, instead of teaching boys to be naughty.'"

Danilov did not go to meet them, he sat there on the step, his arms around his knees.

The boy was the first to run in through the gate. Dusya followed him, a heavy sack on her back. The lad saw the man sitting on the step and slowed down to a walk, his step became slower, he stopped, laughed and said uncertainly:

"Daddy. . . ."

He had grown tall and thin, he was sunburned, and he had no front teeth.

Dusya gasped, dropped the sack and s down on it, as though she had no strength go any further.

Danilov rose, embraced his son and kiss his cropped head. Then he went to his wif

"Get up," he said. She rose, he picked up t sack and carried in into the kitchen, follow by his wife. Silently, with trembling hands s took the shawl from her head and tidied h hair.

Danilov pressed the switch, the light we on and illuminated the happy face of his s and the aged one of his wife.

And Danilov said—tenderly, repentant and wearily:

"Well, tell me how you've been gettin on. . . ."

Translated by Eve Manning

AS THOUGH NOTHING HAD HAPPENED

THE BROTHERS

There once lived two brothers—Nikita and Mitya.

Nikita was neither very big yet, nor very small. He was fond of adventure stories, and he found the most unusual places for reading these adventure stories—places where no ordinary human being would like to read them. For instance, he would crawl under the table, cross his legs and sit on them in Turkish style and stick his fingers in his ears. He found it comfortable to read this way.

Sometimes he would collect match boxes and make automobiles and boats out of them. Unfortunately the boats would very soon go to pieces in water and this was the main disadvantage of having boats made of match boxes.

Sometimes he would race down the corridor at terrific speed, probably at about 30 miles an hour. The cook would be coming out of the kitchen with a plate of cutlets in her hands and something would flash past her like a whirlwind. And before she would say "Boo", the plate and cutlets would go flying to the floor.

Nikita was frequently scolded for his corridor exercises, but since his head was always full of adventure stories he never took offense at such trifling matters. He would simply blurt out breathlessly:

"Sorry, Mum, I won't do it again."

But he would continue to tear along the corridor at a speed of 30 miles an hour.

Nikita had pale greenish eyebrows and lashes, closely cropped hair, and his ears were so thin that after a wash in hot water they hung down for a while like little rags.

His brother Mitya was still a tiny toddler.

But Mitya also lived an independent life, whatever might be said about him.

Whenever he wanted a drink he would say: "Dink, dink."

The spiders that would be brought into the house along with the firewood, he called: "Nosey".

That does not mean, however, that he could not speak. He could speak very well, indeed. Only he would call his wooden horse "Vevit", the dog—"Avava", and Teddy-bear was "Patty".

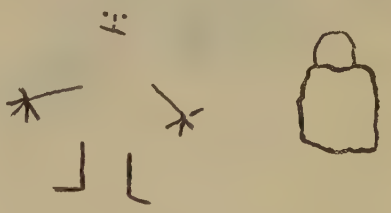
This way Mitya understood things better, and the horse, dog, Teddy and the spiders understood him better, too.

Mitya was a little busybody. He was always up to something. Either he would silently and carefully smear blackberry jam over his face or spill the milk on his clothes. Or else he would push a chair across the floor with a terrific bang, paying no attention to the annoyance of the grown-ups.

He liked to sweep the floor with a broom, or take the potato masher from the kitchen and bang it against a copper tray, raising a great din.

He was very fond of drawing and he showed unmistakable talent for painting.

He would draw "puzzles" and "straight-things". They were very interesting things indeed. This, for instance, was a puzzle, and this a straight-thing.



They were drawn on different parts of a sheet of paper. But if you glanced at the puzzle and then rapidly turned your eyes to the straight-thing you would see an ordinary human shape.

Nikita and Mitya were very fond of each other and frequently played about on the floor like puppies.

FATHER AND MOTHER

Nikita's and Mitya's father went to work every day. Their mother also frequently went out. Father and mother were both as tall as the cupboard, and because they had both grown so tall as the cupboard, many interesting things escaped their notice.

Many times the children would urge them to lie down on the floor and look under the cupboard.

Living under that cupboard were: a big beetle dotted with little spots, two roaches and a hungry spider—"Nosey"—a very dull animal.

From time to time a black cockroach would appear under the cupboard, or a very gay little mouse that would nibble at a piece of sugar or roll a chessman across the floor.

Under the cupboard one could also find an ordinary cork, dead flies, dust that looked like cottonwool, and a tin soldier which could not be reached.

To the offer that they should lie down on the floor and look at these lovely things, mother would answer:

"Please, stop nagging me about your cupboard. As it is my hands are ready to drop."

On hearing this Mitya would become very frightened and for a long time he would trail along after his mother, to see when her hands would begin to drop off.

Nikita and Mitya had long given up trying to persuade their father. Father was very nice but he could not play games. At most, the only thing he could do was to take Mitya on his knee and say:

"Now let's go for a little ride. Gee-up, gee-up. . . ."

Mitya was not very fond of these bumpy rides. You might tumble off at any moment, and then it wasn't at all like a horse.

It was much more fun playing real games. Nikita would straddle the broomstick and Mitya perched himself on the brush handle and galloping they would go down the corridor and around the table, kicking, neighing and shouting "hee-haw, hee-haw."

Their father would throw his paper aside, put his hands over his ears and shake his head:

"Please, have mercy on my ears, or I'll leave the house. . . ."

In their free time the parents devoted themselves to the upbringing of their children.

At dinner you always heard the same thing:

"Nikita, eat your noodles, please, or I'll put you in a dark room!"

"Mitya, stop banging your spoon against the plate!"

"Children, stop champing like little pigs!"

"Children, stop drinking water, there's milk on the table!"

Nikita would wrinkle up his face because he could not make himself swallow the noodles. The dark room didn't frighten him because there wasn't any in the house. But just t not to eat your noodles when two people, ea as tall as the cupboard, look straight into yo mouth and keep saying:

"Eat, eat, eat, eat, eat, eat, eat!"

At this moment Mitya would bang his spo against the pitcher so hard that it wou bring his father and mother to their feet.

Mitya would get his hands slapped. I would snuffle quietly. And Nikita would sei this opportunity and at a speed of 30 miles hour he would dash off to the kitchen with l plate of noodles.

One day Nikita had to face a real storm. happened after he read about the adventu of Max and Morris. He immediately realiz that this was a remarkable book, and he t the story to Mitya. Mitya listened, wheez and agreed to everything. Next morning Ni ta poured water into all the galoshes. He bla ened his face and Mitya's with soot. Cra ing on all fours they rushed into the kitch and frightened the cook.

They stretched ropes across the corrid and everybody fell over them. They put pot peelings into the teapot that stood on top the samovar. That morning they did ma naughty and wonderful things.

Mitya was punished, but he got off light As the initiator, Nikita was more severely pu ished. Yes, that morning they both got wl was coming to them. After that when th father and mother went off to work, Nik said to Mitya:

"Don't expect too much of our parer Mitya. Let's take care of our own educatio

OUT TO BRAVE DANGERS AND ADVENTURES

"Tell me, tiny toddler. . . ."

With these words Nikita dropped his venture story to the floor. He shoved his ha into his pockets, and screwed up his ey which you simply must do when you dec to undertake a daring deed. . . .

"Tell me, tiny toddler: are you a man c sissy, a cry-baby?"

"I'm a man," replied Mitya without a r ment's hesitation. He was sitting on floor trying to repair an engine that h broken for some reason.

Children! If you have an engine don't k on repairing it until you break it. And i does break then fix it properly. Don't pu any unnecessary things into the insides of engine; don't try to glue it together w spittle, because it won't stick. But the m important thing is to take care of the whe Don't press them into squares. . . .

Such an engine is called a broken engi

On hearing Mitya's reply Nikita wrink up his forehead and said:

"That's the stuff! I expected no other swer from you: I can see that you take af your brother. You know what? I'm tired staying at home. Let's go travelling!"

"But where will we go? To the zoo?" asl Mitya.

"No, I have no use for wild beasts in cag It's no fun unless you meet a tiger, a mad phant, a fierce rhinoceros, or a hungry boa the open."

Saying this, Nikita stuck out his jaw.

Mitya puffed and also put out his chin. They ad visions of wild beasts in wild forests.

It does not matter that they saw all this in eir imagination; let us make believe that ey really did land in a huge forest inhabit- by boa constrictors, crocodiles, spiders and untless little monkeys. . . .

Very soon Nikita showed what a brave fel- w he was.

He skilfully got out of the way of a rhino- ros that stuck its horn into a baobab and mained rooted to the spot.

With equal skill he forced a cane into a cro- dile's mouth and the crocodile too remained oted to the spot. With equal skill he tied the ils of a whole pack of monkeys into one not—that was real fun!

He threw sand into a lion's eyes, and fooled boa constrictor by making it swallow a abby chair instead of himself, and the snake oked to death.

Mitya was too small to fight monsters. He as very frightened and immediately found imelf back in his room. After disposing of e mad elephant, Nikita emerged from his fan- stic forests and found himself back in the om again next to Mitya. . . .

"Off we go, Mitya! Hoist the sails!"

Mitya looked round to see what kind of ils Nikita was referring to and asked:

"Will we go by boat?"

"You've guessed it, toddler: we'll go by oat. Get ready! Take no unnecessary things. ust a blanket, gun and a bottle of milk."

"And may I take my ball?" asked Mitya.

"You mustn't."

"And my bucket and spade?"

"Mustn't."

"And my mechanical man and his wheel- arrow—may I take it?"

"Mustn't. Now keep quiet and don't ask uestions or you'll get left behind."

"And Teddy, shan't we take Teddy?" asked Mitya.

But Nikita no longer paid attention to his illy questions. Without losing any time he roceeded to make preparations for the voy- ge. He took the shopping bag from the kitchen nd put two heavy blankets in it.

Everybody knows that travellers and North American Indians never venture anywhere without blankets.

Then he put into this bag the key to the flat, two apples, some salt in a bit of paper, a piece of bread, Mitya's bottle of milk, toy cartridges for his gun, a bundle of arrows skilfully poisoned by steeping them into the kitchen slop pail, two spare swords and sugar emptied from the sugar bowl into a stocking.

Nikita pulled the sheet off his bed, took the broomstick, tied both ends of the sheet to the stick and they had an excellent sail.

Then Nikita and Mitya armed themselves from head to toe.

Nikita took the shopping bag and Mitya the sail, and stealthily they crept towards the stairway, dropping to the floor at every suspicious noise, walked down the stairs, slammed the door and ran out of the house.

They reached the boathouse on the bank of the Zhdanovka near Tuchkov Bridge. At this moment Gypsy approached them.

GYPSY

Gypsy was not a real Gypsy—black bearded, ear-rings in his ears, and a copper cauldron over his shoulder.

This Gypsy was a dog. He pressed his cold nose to Mitya's cheek, then gave Nikita his paw, and smiled politely. Just like this.

Gypsy was a lean grey dog, a very kind animal and a great friend of Nikita and Mitya, and so clever that a boy from Zhdanovka once said that this dog could even speak Russian, but not always, only when he wanted to.

One evening when Gypsy was seated next to this boy on the bank of the Zhdanovka, he suddenly spoke up and told the boy his life story:

"I was born on Krestovsky Island. I lost my mother at an early age and had a very hard childhood.

"Boys pulled my tail and my ears and threw me into the pond to make me learn to swim. Cats spat in my face and scratched me with their claws. Hens pecked at me whenever I tried to snatch a bit of food from their dish.

"But I grew up and became hardened by these trials. At one time I was misled by Brovka, a stray pup who induced me to make raids on food shops.

"There is no denying that a piece of mutton or sausage off the counter makes a good meal. You eat so much that you become too lazy to wag your tail to drive away a fly. But at one shop a weight was thrown at me, and at another the butchers chopped a bit of my tail off and threatened to mince me into sausages next time. Yes, those raids caused me a lot of trouble.

"In one yard a dog about the size of a calf was set on us, and Brovka's fur went flying into the air. I managed to get away somehow with only my ears torn, 'No more plunder' I said to myself and I hired myself out to a man—to be chained down and bark all night long. So I sat near the kennel thinking: 'What a bore and what a waste of time this is. You've sold yourself, Gypsy, for a pail of slops. . . Let the old man sit in the kennel and guard his own property. . . .'

"So I left him and led a hungry life. We dogs are an unorganized crowd; each shifts for himself. One day, when I was lying in the sun in an orchard, sick with hunger, Nikita and Mitya came over, were sorry for me and patted me and gave me a roll. I shall never forget that moment, I swallowed the roll whole and in appreciation showed the boys how I could walk on my hind legs. Since then I have been a happy tramp. I make a living by being an artist for the youthful population. I come over to them with a kind face, bark, do a somersault, whirl about and try to catch my tail. It even makes me laugh. And when I see a nursemaid I look at her sadly, with a tear in my eye, until she begins to understand that the dog is hungry.

"And that is all there is to my humble life story."

And so this famous Gypsy approached Nikita and Mitya at the moment when they were trying to select a boat for their trip.

The watchman, an old riverman with a big beard, dressed in a padded waistcoat, came out of the boathouse.

He was called Pankrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov.[1] He was an old friend of Nikita's.

"Want a boat?" he asked. "And suppose I give you a boat and you drown and my boat gets lost?" boomed Pankrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov in such a deep, gruff voice that Mitya backed away, and sat down on the grass and Gypsy began to growl.

Nikita, however, kept calm. He took sixty-five kopeks out of a match box and, offering the money to the boatman, pledged on his word of honour not to drown and not to lose the boat.

Pankrat Ivanych puffed at his pipe for some time, scratched his beard and his chest under his padded waistcoat, and finally agreed and brought two oars out of the boathouse.

The boat which he pointed out to Nikita was painted yellow on the outside and green inside with a red border. It was called "Sparrow".

The blankets, guns, sail, and food were loaded into the boat. Nikita took the oars and Mitya took his place at the rudder. Pankrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov took his pipe out of his mouth and cried out to them in his gruff voice:

"Push off, crew!"

Just then Gypsy leaped into the boat and sat down in the middle with a broad grin on his dog face. . . .

"Good for you, Gypsy!" said Nikita. "Come along."

He pushed off and the "Sparrow" left harbour with the three travellers and sailed forth along the calm Zhdanovka, past low, green banks.

BATTLE AGAINST SAVAGES

Stretching along the bank of Zhdanovka are the tall lime trees of Petrovsky Park, and old shady willows bend over the stream.

The "Sparrow" drifted softly downstream. Noon was approaching, and it grew very hot. Nikita steered closer to the left bank, under the shade of the willows.

The huge stadium built for Olympic games, the white tents of a military school camp and the old tumbledown cottage of the watchman, near which chickens were wandering and the little pig was scrubbing his back against the trough, were left behind.

Two big horses raced through the park on their way to the lake.

A goat tied to a tree grazed on the grass; its white kid, rising on its hind legs, and holding on to a tree, tried to tear a leaf off the branch.

A column of Young Pioneers, dressed in shorts, passed by with banner and drum.

A sun-bronzed man climbed up a tree, and jerking his legs in the air went plump into the Zhdanovka and swam away.

Then boys appeared among the trees. They made faces, stuck their tongues out, waved sticks and performed some savage dance.

Nikita realized at once that they were Savages. Gypsy growled. Mitya stuck out his chin.

"Hey, you there in the boat! Pull ashore, we'll box your ears!" cried the Savages, black devils they were.

Everybody knows that it is better to enter into mortal combat with Savages rather than surrender alive. All famous travellers say so in their stories.

"Come closer, we'll lick you!" they shouted, approaching the bank in a crowd

[1] Perchpike.

"Miserable little insects! They hardly each above ground, and look at them—in a at! Row towards the bank!" yelled the Savges threateningly.

Gypsy leaped up with an angry bark. This as too much for Mitya, this was too much: a moment he would thrust his lower lip ward, burst into tears.

Three, four, five Savages jumped into the ver and standing waist-deep in the water ied to hook the boat with sticks. The position f the travellers seemed desperate, almost opeless.

Nikita dropped the oars and seized his old nd tried bow.

It you want to make a bow, cut a willow vithe, scrape off the bark and make notches at oth ends with a penknife. Bend the withe, onnect the ends with a string, just an ordinry bit of string will do, but if you can get n oxstring it'll be just marvellous. And that's ll. With such a bow the first man killed the irst mammoth.

Discharging an arrow from a tower in Troy, Paris, the cunning Greek, hit the heel of Achiles; Ilya Muromets hit Solovei, the notorious bandit and raider, who perched himself on top of seven oaks; the merry English routed the merry French in the battle of Crecy, their arrows penetrating the armour of the Knights and their horses.

And so, Nikita seized this terrible weapon, pulled a poisoned arrow from under his belt, put it on the string and leaning far back to pull the bow with all his might, let go at the Savage who was nearest to the boat.

The arrow poisoned in the kitchen slop pail hit the Savage right in the stomach.

"You, devil!" groaned the Savage and turned right back to the bank, while Mitya uttered a deafening scream of delight. . . .

Only he could scream like this, and he was punished more than once for this ear-splitting scream.

Gypsy barked furiously, rocking the boat with his paws.

Nikita seized another arrow, and, taking him at a Savage who was about to enter the water, hit him in the unprotected rear.

"Oh, oh!" cried the unhappy Savage.

The third, fourth and fifth arrows were sent flying into the crowd of wild devils doing their antics on the bank. With a howl they began to retreat under the shower of arrows.

One of them, the smallest, who was without any trousers, dropped on his stomach and cried:

"Maaaaaaamma!"

In the meantime the current carried the boat away from the battlefield. Nikita laid his bow aside. His ears were still as red, as tomato slices.

The travellers were safe.

It must be remembered that travellers always escape from one danger only to meet another. There is no greater satisfaction than to overcome dangers and boldly sail forward to meet new adventures.

THE SAIL

There was no need to hurry. Nikita pulled his oars in and the "Sparrow" glided down the Zhdanovka, past the sawmills, endless fences and fishermen.

Some of the fishermen were standing on the bridge; others sat on the beams, or dozed on the grass.

The anglers hook the worm, spit on it for luck, lower the rod and sit there watching the float.

And the perch, or pike, or catfish, peep at the fisherman from under the water. The main thing in fishing is patience—who will have the greater patience; the fish or the fisherman.

Sometimes a pike keeps on looking at the worm so long that its mouth begins to water. It knows that it is dangerous, for it may swallow the bait. But hunger is stronger than caution. "Perhaps I'll tear it off somehow," thinks the pike, makes a dash for the worm and is caught.

It happens also that an old, experienced perch, the most cunning fich, begins to torture the fisherman. Getting hold of the worm's tail with its lips, it holds on to it. "Come on bite, old boy, bite some more..." thinks the

fisherman. And the scoundrel of a perch sticks the hook onto some old shoe, rubber or dead cat at the bottom of the river.

Instead of a fish the unfortunate angler pulls out some nasty mess which sends everybody around him into fits of laughter.

Of the passengers in the boat Mitya alone thought fishing a pleasant pastime. Nikita and Gypsy regarded this occupation with contempt. But we already know that Mitya was fond of sitting calmly, thinking slowly and snorting quietly.

He asked Nikita to row towards the bank to do some fishing. This led to an argument amongst the travellers in the boat. Nikita cursed in the real sailors' lingo:

"Mitya, you old, rotten cachalot, keep quiet or I'll ram a rum bottle down your throat!"

Mitya was already pushing out his lower lip; but just then a breeze blew up, ruffling the water and Nikita began to adjust the sail.

Nikita fastened a small mast in the hole under the front seat. On top of the mast was a small wheel, known as a *pulley* in sailors' language. Through this pulley he stretched a rope, called a *halyard* by sailors.

You must remember once and for all: the

word "rope" does not exist among sailors. Ships have *shrouds*, and *halyards*, and *sheets*, and *cables* for anchoring and mooring. The most ordinary rope is called a *tack* on board a ship.

Beware of saying the word "rope" on the high seas, or you will be thrown overboard as a hopeless landlubber.

To the flag Nikita tied the sail made of a sheet and broomstick, but in sailors' language such a sail is called a *top-sail*, and the broomstick would be called a *sail-yard*, or simply *yard*.

The other end of the halyard, the so-called *sheet*, Nikita held in his hand.

"Hold the halyards, hoist the top-sail, tack about, fasten the sheets!" cried Nikita in the voice of a real old salt.

The sail was hoisted. The wind filled it. Listing, the "Sparrow" glided with increasing speed past the fishermen, fences and boats, towards the sawmill which stands at the confluence of the Zhdanovka, and the Malaya Nevka.

The boat began to rock. The waves lashed its sides. The "Sparrow" began to dive by the prow and like an arrow dashed across the Malaya Nevka towards Krestovsky Island.

The wind whistled and water splashed in their faces. Mitya was softly hissing with delight.

Right near the island, near the rushes, Nikita made a sharp turn. Water splashed at the sail.

Suddenly there was a bump and a crash as the boat hit the green landing stage.

Mitya's legs kicked in the air and he rolled overboard into the water like a ball.

GYPSY SHOWS HIS BEST TRICK

One can boldly and safely face the most frightful shipwrecks at home, in the nursery. The only unpleasant thing that may happen is: the door flies open; father with a newspaper in his hand and mother behind him, her hands clasping her ears, rush in with the cry:

"Children, quiet!"

But sailing in a real boat and on real water is not as simple.

The water is dangerous and treacherous, and the sailor must always be on his guard, on the alert.

The sailor must above all be brave, quick-brained and calm.

And so the accident on the "Sparrow" occurred in a flash. Before you could count three the boat, sailing at top speed, hit a beam. Mitya fell overboard. His frightened eyes, hands, legs and fair hair flew past Nikita and dropped into the water.

Nikita held his breath, but the next second he was on his feet. Nikita was a brave boy.

He would probably have made a good sailor. He had courage, a quick brain and a cool head.

He saw Mitya five feet away from the boat. At first Mitya disappeared under the water but then struggled towards the surface. He was drifting away with the current.

"Nikita!" his feeble voice reached his brother.

Nikita plunged into the river.

He also disappeared under the water but immediately reappeared on the surface. The current carried Mitya another few feet away. Nikita could float all right, but he was not a fast swimmer. He did not yet know how to take strokes that keep all the muscles working and the swimmer almost completely on the surface. Straining all his strength he cried out:

"Hold on, hold on!.. Just a bit longer. . . ."

Mitya floundered, but his strength was waning. For a moment his head disappeared under the water, and reappeared on the surface again.

Just then Gypsy, snorting and splashing with his paws, swam past Nikita.

The dog swam as if propelled by a motor. Mitya's head vanished again, only his clutching fingers were visible above water. Gypsy dived, caught Mitya by the shirt collar and swam back towards the bank.

They reached the rushes. The dog struggled up the bank with Mitya in his teeth. He put the boy on the grass, and shook the water off, sending drops flying in all directions. Then Gypsy returned to the river and swam towards Nikita. He did it just in the nick of time, for Nikita had begun to grow weak. Gypsy swam towards him, looking at the boy with his clever serious eyes as if to say:

"Don't be afraid, keep calm, make no unecessary movements, hang on to me tight-. . . ."

Nikita understood. When Gypsy reached im the boy clutched at the dog's fur. He felt imself raised lightly to the surface; boy and og turned towards the bank where the misrable and drenched Mitya was sitting and itting up water.

Thus Gypsy performed his best trick.

ATTACKED BY BEASTS

Mitya realized that tears were out of place nder the circumstances, but could not refrain om pouting his lips. He wheezed awfully. Nikita's whole body ached with fatigue. e even lacked the strength to untie his shoeaces.

The first to recover his cheerfulness was ypsy. With a vigorous movement he shook ff the water and rolled from side to side on he grass to get dry.

Clearly Gypsy was not looking for special xpressions of gratitude.

Suddenly Nikita jumped up with a desperte cry:

"The boat!!!"

The boat was nowhere to be seen along the ank or further down the river. Nikita's ace turned ashen grey.

"And the ammunition, provisions and blanets . . . all gone. . . And what will Panrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov say?"

Nikita ran along the bank. He ran past a ttle wood. The "Sparrow" had vanished ithout trace.

Well, there was nothing to do but console neself with the thought that adventures of a r graver nature had befallen other travelrs.

How would you like, for example, to find ourself on a coral island after a shipwreck id for six months have nothing to eat but imy clams? Burrrrrr!

Or imagine yourself afloat on a broken mast a sea teeming with sharks. You have a dagr in your hand and with this dagger you rip e bellies of the brazen monsters.

I will not go on to remind you of all the mmonplace cases when a traveller is tied to a brightly painted post and has disgusting creatures jumping in front of him, waving knives and tomahawks. . . .

These recollections restored Nikita's courage, resourcefulness and calm. He returned to his companions. Just then he heard Gypsy's fierce barking and Mitya's cries:

"Help! Help! . . . "

Nikita ran out of the woods to behold a spectacle which made his ears turn crimson as a tomato.

He saw Mitya standing and waving his hands as if he were driving off mosquitoes, and near him Gypsy was barking angrily.

From the right a flock of geese was advancing on them. The birds ran with necks stretched forward, hissing ominously. A spotted calf was racing towards them from the left, its appearance boding no good, and from the front an old, nasty, bearded billy goat was advancing upon them.

They were clearly outnumbered by their enemies. The situation of the travellers became desperate.

Nikita's ears were flaming, but not from fear. Indeed not; the ears of brave boys flush when they are spoiling for a good fight. Nikita bent down and picked up a stick and with a loud war whoop:

"Go for that billy goat! Go for that spotted calf! Go for the geese! . . ."

He rushed forward, waving his stick to attack the beasts from the rear.

Under this onslaught the geese drew back

hissing more furiously. The spotted calf stopped, waving its tail in confusion and looking from side to side.

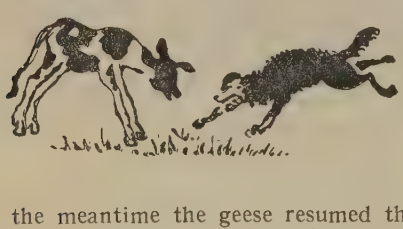
But the sly billy goat, that bearded good-for-nothing, was not the kind of an animal to deny himself the pleasure of butting a little boy with his horns. His back had felt the blows of a heavier weapon than Nikita's stick.

Rearing quickly on his hind hoofs, the billy goat went for Nikita with his head down.

Nikita leaped back, evaded the blow and hit the billy goat with such force that the stick broke in pieces. The billy goat renewed his attack and circled round Nikita trying to butt him from the right and the left, and finally hit him in the rear.

Nikita fell. This was just what the billy goat wanted. He stopped about two feet from him, lowered his beard to the ground, rolled his eyes and cried insolently:

"Baaaa, you're beaten!"



In the meantime the geese resumed their offensive on Mitya, and the calf, jumping and kicking, turned its attention to Gypsy.

Our travellers would not have got off so easily but for the sudden roll of a drum. The drummer appeared on the battlefield.

THE DRUMMER

He was a well-built lad, bronzed by the sun, dressed in shorts and with a drum suspended from a strap over his shoulder.

The drummer sounded the alarm. His lips were tightly compressed, and there was a resolute expression on his face. The astonished geese began to retreat again. The calf uttered a frightened moo, waved its tail and began to gallop round the battlefield.

The billy goat left Nikita and turned towards the drummer. But, completely unruffled, the drummer continued to beat the drum. Three boys, as sun-tanned as the drummer, appeared from the woods and raced across the field to the rescue.

They seized the billy goat by his horns and gave him a sound thrashing with a leather belt:

"That will teach you to butt!"

Then they drove off the geese, and the calf galloped away, its tail raised, to trample other people's gardens.

After disposing of the beasts the boys came over to Nikita and Mitya.

"Where are you from, comrades?" asked the drummer.

"We are travellers, and we come from Zhdanovka," answered Nikita.

"Dear me, you both seem to have had a good ducking. Was it your boat that came drifting towards Petrovsky Bridge a while ago?"

"A green one? With a red border? That's the "Sparrow"—It's our boat alright!"

"Good," said the drummer, "come along to the camp."

Nikita, holding Mitya by the hand, and Gypsy trailing after them, followed the drummer and the three other boys across the field to the Pioneer camp. On the way Nikita told them about their adventures.

GETTING DRY BY THE BONFIRE

The camp situated in the forest clearing was almost completely deserted. Seated on the grass near a tent a boy was reading a book. Another boy, the guard on duty, stood motionless near the Red Banner. A third boy was busy near the campfire where a pot was suspended from a tripod over the fire. The leaves rustled and the sky over the camp was blue.

The drummer explained that the Pioneers were away, some working in the garden, others swimming, training in sports—racing, jumping and discus-throwing. They would soon come back, he said, for their evening meal.

The drummer showed Nikita and Mitya their places near the campfire and advised them to undress and dry their clothes and shoes. They took his advice.

It was a pleasure to sit in front of the fire. The smell of smoke and of the food cooking in the pot was good.

After all their adventures Nikita suddenly became aware of a gnawing hunger. Mitya's mouth watered. Gypsy laid his head on his paws and kept staring at the pot.

The boy who busied himself at the fire took three big potatoes out of the ashes. He broke two of them, blowing on his fingers, salted them and handed the potatoes to Nikita and Mitya.

"I'll bet you've never eaten such good potatoes," he said confidently.

He threw the third potato to Gypsy.

No words can describe the delicious taste of the potatoes which Nikita, Mitya and Gypsy ate at the Pioneer campfire.

Mitya's stomach stuck out like the dome of a loaf.

You try baking potatoes this way and you'll see how good they are.

Finally the drummer said:
"Your clothes are dry. Get dressed, or you'll
et home late and get a thrashing from your
ther and mother."
Then he turned to the two boys saying:
"We've got to see the kids home."
The two boys jumped to their feet and com-
ng to attention replied:
"Ready."
The drummer slipped the drum onto his
oulder and they marched off towards Pet-
vsky Bridge. On the way Nikita saw a Pio-
eer practising pole-vaulting.
Three other Pioneers were racing.
Others were playing football, romping in
ie grass and laughing loudly.
Some boys were climbing trees, rocking
n the branches, trying to pull each other
own by the legs.
At every step boys clad in shorts could
e seen among the trees in the cheerful, green
rest. Even the indifferent Mitya, who hard-
r ever got excited over anything, walked
ver silently to a birch, tried to climb it and
ll back with a groan. At Petrovsky Bridge
ikita saw the "Sparrow" tied to a beam.
small angry Pioneer was guarding the boat.
"Hurrah!" roared Nikita, Mitya and Gypsy.
Gypsy yelled like this:
"Uhhhh-rrrrrrr-rhrhrhrh. . . ."

Nikita, Mitya and Gypsy climbed into
ne boat where they found everything intact;
ne of the Pioneers took the oars, another
ook his place at the rudder: the drummer on
ne bank beat his drum, the angry little boy
kipped a stone across the water, and the
Sparrow" with its travellers sailed forth
n its return trip.

S THOUGH NOTHING HAD HAPPENED

A fresh wind began to blow. Mitya's teeth
gan to chatter, and that was when the blan-
ts prudently taken by the travellers came
handy.
Mitya was wrapped in the blankets, given
is bottle of milk, and after draining it he
ll asleep in the softly rocking boat.
Nikita produced his stocking with the su-
ar in it, treated the Pioneers and munched
me himself. The sugar was all eaten up,
nd Gypsy devoured all the bread.
When they sailed past the now famous
lace of battle with the Savages, Nikita and
wo Pioneers who knew all the details cried
n chorus:

"Beware, you redskin devils!"
Nikita brandished his sword and bow. Gypsy growled like a cave bear. And the remnants of the routed Savages making sullen faces from behind the trees on the bank, were afraid to come closer.
It was five in the afternoon when the "Sparrow" pulled into harbour.
Standing on the wharf was Pankrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov with his pipe, clad in the same padded jacket, and with his beard, in which, it was rumoured in Zhdanovka, even cockroaches could be found.
The sun was dazzling bright, its glow reflected in the calm water between the low left bank and the tall buildings on the right bank. Pankrat Ivanych squinted and suddenly. . . .
Sneezed:
"Ke-e-et-chu-u-u-u-u!!!. . ."
And what a sneeze it was!
It set the moorings rocking, the boats creaking, and a crow that had perched on the roof of the boathouse to preen its plumes soared into the air with a loud cry and for a long time kept turning back screaming angrily at Ershov-Karasyov:
"Craacked! Craacked!"
That's how Pankrat Ivanych Ershov-Karasyov sneezed!
On the planks the Pioneers said goodbye to Nikita and Mitya. Then crooking their arms, they raced across the dyke and the footbridge which leads from Tuchkov Bridge to the stadium and then across Petrovsky Island to the camp.
Nikita and Mitya collected their ammunition, sail and luggage and also ran home.
At the gate they parted from Gypsy with a:
"Goodbye until tomorrow, doggie!"
Gypsy looked politely at the travellers, wagged his tail and went off to attend to his own affairs.
Nikita unlocked the door with his key and the two brothers tip-toed into their own bedroom. They quickly unpacked all the things and put them back where they belonged: the blankets were returned to the beds, the gun was put under the bed, the sheet stuck under the pillow, the broomstick returned to the broom and put in its place in the corridor.
Nikita sat down at the window and opened his book of adventure stories, and Mitya sat down on the floor to continue the repair of his engine.
They sat there, looking for all the world as if nothing has happened.
The door bell rang a few minutes later: Father and Mother came home from work.
The children went out to meet them as though nothing had happened.
At dinner Nikita and Mitya did justice to the noodles, and the meat too, when meat and horseradish was served. They ate well, and then asked for milk and drank their milk too. Nikita nudged Mitya, and both boys laughed into their plates.
They laughed because their parents who started dinner with the usual remarks, fell silent and stared in wonder at their children.
"Daddy, were you ever butted by a billy goat?" asked Mitya.
"Butted—never," replied his father. "You'd

better tell me what's come over you? I don't know what you're talking about."

Then Nikita said in a matter-of-fact tone:

"We travelled on a yacht called the 'Sparrow'. On the Zhdanovka, near the broken willow, we routed a tribe of the red-skinned savages. After that we were shipwrecked, and were attacked by beasts, but a brave drummer rescued us. We visited the camp and were the guests of a very friendly tribe and came back home safely."

"And how Pankrat Ivanych sneezes! Can you sneeze like that, Daddy?" asked Mitya.

His father looked annoyed:

"You do talk nonsense, both of you! I have noticed that you are growing wilder every day. I am very pleased by your good appetites, but just look what a sight you are—your noses bruised. . . And your hands. . . Your faces. . . Why, you look like brigands, ruffians, not like our children. . . ."

"But the drummer called us fine lads," remarked Nikita.

And Mitya asked:

"Daddy, can you beat a drum?"

Their father gave up, picked up the nev paper and went out on the porch to rea Their mother smiled wistfully and shook h head as she was clearing away the dish

She was suddenly overcome by a sadn at the thought that she could no longer ta tiny Nikita or tiny Mitya into her arms a pet them and smother them with kisses of old. And she was amused by their air independence, the way they walked wi their poisoned arrows, bruised noses and wild look in their eyes.

Back in the nursery Nikita said to Mity

"You know, after all, Mother and D didn't believe we were really travellin Do you know what I'll do? I'll write a sto about this trip and you will draw the pictu for it. We will publish a book and then e erybody will believe us."

Nikita immediately proceeded to write th story, and Mitya to draw thousands of "pu zles" and "straight-things".

Translated by Lia Gavurina and Fanny Segal

Drawings by Mavrina

ALEXANDER BLOK

IN THE CAFE

I shall never forget (and yet often I wonder
If it actually happened)—that night,
When the flare of the sunset tore heaven asunder,
And the lamp-posts were etched against light.

The café was crowded—not far from my table
Someone's bow scratched an amourous strain,
Then I sent you a rose that had petals of sable,
And floated in amber champaign.

Your manner was haughty. In brazen confusion
I answered your glance with a bow.
With a smile to your escort to mark my intrusion
You boasted: "He, too, loves me now."

The violins answered with sudden dissension,
Some frenzy infested their whine,
From your trembling fingers and proud condescension
I knew that this moment was mine.

But you rose like a bird that is startled and flashes
In beauty—a dream did you seem—
With a whiff of perfume and a sweeping of lashes,
With a taffeta rustle and gleam.

But you tossed me a glance from the depths of a mirror,
Cried "Catch it,"—your treacherous glove.
A Gypsy danced nearer, her bangles flashed clearer,
As she shrilled to the sunset of love.

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Translated by Margaret Wettlin

* * *

The Petrograd heaven was muddy with rain,
The soldiers were off to the war,
Rank by rank, gun by gun they kept boarding the train,
Crowding car upon car to the door.

A thousand young lives went away on that day—
Pain of parting, a lover's dismay,
Strength, youth, hope their destiny lay
Under bloody-rimmed cloud-banks of gray.

They settled themselves and tried to be gay,
Some sang to dissemble their loss,
Others shuffled the cards and started to play,
A few made the sign of the cross.

Of a sudden a leaf was flung down by the wind,
The station lights blinked in the blow,
A bugler lifted his bugle and grinned,
Then blasted the signal to go.

His music recounted the glories of war,
Filling hearts of the soldiers with fear,
A grating of wheels, a mechanical roar,
A thousand "hurrahs" in a cheer.

Soon the last of the cars was erased by the rain—
Only rain at the pane once again,
Yet the soldier's "hurrah!" echoed over the plain,
In an eager insistent refrain.

No, we knew then no sorrow, we knew no regret,
Though the rain stretched unceasing as yet.
Our steel was the strongest, the best to be met,
Why then should we sorrow and fret?

Our regret—it was silenced by thunderous booms
From the cannon, by tumult and fire.
Our grief—it was smothered by poisonous fumes
From Galicia, where blood stained the mire.

1914

Translated by Margaret Wettlin

ALEXANDER BLOK

Alexander Blok. Water colour by C. Somov.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the death of a great Russian poet—Alexander Blok.

"The world was torn asunder and with it the heart of the poet," said Heinrich Heine speaking about events following the revolution of 1789. These same words could well be applied to Alexander Blok although he lived and wrote in a different historical period. His poetry developed under the impact of the social upheavals occurring at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, and which culminated in the greatest revolution in history in October 1917. The path of Alexander Blok was one of painful and tragic seeking, of persistent effort to overcome the "impassable line" dividing the intellectuals of the old nobility and bourgeoisie from the people.

"The cursed problems" of the epoch unceasingly tortured the sensitive conscience of the highly impressionable poet and they influenced the entire nature of his work. They determined the exceptional significance of Blok's lyric verses. After his death, the famous Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, who proclaimed the new epoch of revolutionary poetry, wrote: "Blok's creative work is an entire poetical epoch in itself. This great symbolist exercized a tremendous influence upon modern poetry as a whole."

Blok wrote in many genres: plays, articles, literary reviews; he translated a great deal from both classic and modern languages. But first and foremost he remains a lyric poet.

It is extremely difficult to convey the power, delicacy and expressiveness of his lyrics to the foreign reader, for even the best translations cannot reflect those specific features of Blok's verse which are their greatest beauty. The distinguishing feature of Blok's lyric poetry is its music to which the poet himself attached exceptional importance. He considered that music was the essence of existence, that there were musical epochs and epochs when the power of music failed:

"In the beginning there was music. Music is the true meaning of the world. The world waxes in elastic rhythms. The growth stops only to break forth again. Such is the law of all organic life, both of man and of humanity." Without entering into polemics on this theory, it must be acknowledged that with such an approach to poetry, the sound of words and the rhythm of the verse plays an outstandingly important role.

* * *

Alexander Blok's life was not an eventful one. He was born in 1880. His father was a professor of law in the Warsaw University and his mother was an authoress and translator, the daughter of the famous botanist Andrei Beketov. Soon after the birth of the poet, his parents separated and his mother went to live with her parents. Alexander Blok grew up in his grandfather's house. This was a family of the old nobility, distinguished by their liberalism, high culture and wide and varied circle of interests in science and art, in Russian and foreign literature. Alexander Blok was the only child in this family, he was the sole object of the love and care of his grandmother, mother and aunts. His childhood passed on his grandfather's estate "Shakhmatovo" some sixty miles from Moscow. The future poet grew up in this secluded corner, with its old-world atmosphere of semi-patriarchal life—an environment which moulded his early views and understandings.

Later he graduated high school in Petersburg, which left little impression on his mind and entered the university where he first studied law and then transferred to the historical-philological faculty which he completed.

In his student years (1903) he married the daughter of the famous Russian chemist Mendeleyev. After the university his life was equally poor in events. His family, literary work, several journeys abroad, travels to Italy, France, Belgium and Holland—these formed the outward pattern of his life. But the spiritual life of the poet was intense, strenuous and complex.

"I began to write seriously," wrote Alexander Blok in his autobiography, "when I was about eighteen years old. For the first three or four years I showed my writings only to my mother and my aunt. These were all lyrics and by the time my first volume: *Verses of a Beautiful Lady* was published, some 800 of these had accumulated, not including those written in boyhood."

In 1903 the poet's verses were first published in the magazine *Novy Put* (New Way) and the almanac *Severnyie Tsvety* (Northern Flowers).

Having grown up in the atmosphere of romanticism of the old country nobility, under conditions of the decay and decline of this social world of the nineties of the 19th century, Alexander Blok felt its extreme insecurity and lack of support; nevertheless he was full of hostility to the bourgeois world and its culture.

Hence grew the desire to escape from reality and turn to romantic dreams, to mysticism, to the world of images, secret and inexpressible, to withdraw to the celestial heights. These are the features which colour Alexander Blok's early works.

Blok joined the trend of symbolism in literature. This teaching was based on the acknowledgement of two worlds—the terrestrial and the spiritual. The terrestrial world is only the gate leading to that other, eternal, divine world. The true meaning of poetry lies in using this earth as a springboard from which to float into the world of the eternal, the mysterious, the divine. Words and images are symbols, signs from that other world. The terrestrial song of the poet is meant to awaken other celestial chords in the hearts of his hearers. The visible world is only a reflection of the invisible one. In portraying the visible the poet discovers the divine secret, the invisible meaning hidden behind all things.

Naturally, with such an aim in view, the portrayal of the visible becomes blurred and unnatural, indefinite and of multiple meaning.

The symbolists attached great importance to the musical sound, to the rhythm and destruction of the usually accepted connection between words and concepts. All this we find reflected in Blok's poetry.

His early poems expose the "sacred" dream of the mysterious and the divine, of the "Belle Dame" to the rejected reality. Exalted mysticism, love pure and sacred, romantic dreams, individualism coloured by grief—such are the contents of his poetry.

A maiden's song in the choir was telling
Of all who in far-off countries fret,
Of all ships that sail upon waters swelling,
Of all who their happiness forget.

So sang her voice, in the great dome soaring;
On her pale white shoulders the gleam was bright,

And everyone in the dimness hearing
Saw a pale dress sing in the gleaming light.

And it seemed that near to them gladness hovered,

That in quiet rivers each ship was at rest,
That the weary people had discovered
In far-off lands the life of the blest.
The voice was sweet, and the light was throbbing

And only on high, at the Holy Door,
A child partook of the Mystery, sobbing
For one who would never come back to him more

Such was Blok's poetry of this period.

Blok did not remain long in the clutches of this exalted-religious, monk-like mysticism. From adoration of the sacred dream he plunges headlong into the world of wine and demoniac, sensuous debauchery. About this period Anatoli Lunacharsky wrote:

"And perhaps not only the white-winged flight to the sacred dream can show us, although but dimly—'in a glass darkly' as said the apostle Paul—those other worlds. Perhaps also in sinful depths, in the lower depths of the satanic in life, of the forgetfulness born of drink and depravity, at the bottom of the abyss, is found the same contact with an eternal force which lies on the other side of good and evil, but which promises to free man from all the rules, problems, doubts and cares which fetter him, and to plunge him into the flaming ocean of the music of true existence beyond time and space."

This change to eroticism, to a metaphysical conception of sin was already faintly outlined in Blok's works at the beginning of the period of adoration of the Beautiful Lady. Already then he had composed verses revealing the "duality" of the soul, the demon in the monk.

Later, the theme of the city replaces the quiet country landscapes in Blok's lyrics. During these years Blok was strongly influenced by the great representative of the Russian symbolism—Valeri Bryusov, the urban poet. But whereas Bruysov paints the city as a giant, full of technical miracles, full of charm and power, one lauded in hymns and praise, Blok pictures the city as something terrible, as a "swollen spider, sucking the surrounding reality, emitting a roar, smoke and evil stench." In Blok's verses we see Petersburg as a terrible city in which man wanders as in a desert a homeless, doomed victim.

Night, a street, a lamp, a chemist-shop,
A meaningless and dull world.
Live another quarter of a century—
All will be the same. There is no way out.

Die—you will begin afresh,
And all will be repeated as of old.
Night, the canal's frozen ripple,
The chemist-shop, the street, the lamp.

"The Beautiful Lady" of Blok's poetry of the first period becomes the mysterious "Unknown", met in a restaurant, a mocking and sinful Gypsy. (Gypsy singers and dance were much in vogue in the restaurants of Petersburg and Moscow of those days.)

But every evening at the fated hour
Or is it just my dream?
A figure moves across the misted window,
A girl in silks that gleam.

Slowly she passes through the drunken rabble
Companionless and fair,

And by the window sits, a mist of perfume
Spread round her in the air.

Her silken waist, her hat of sable feathers,
Her narrow hand with rings,
Seem to exhale a breath of long-forgotten
And legendary things,

Tranced by the wonder of her nearness, stirring
To pierce her shadowy veil,
I look on an enchanted shore, a distance
Beyond some magic pale.

Unspoken mysteries to me are given,
Another's sun is mine;
Transfused through every corner of my being
Steals the astringent wine.

Within my brain the drooping ostrich feathers
Wave languidly and sweep;
Blue on that distant shore the eyes that
flower
Immeasurably deep.

Safe in my soul there lies a hoarded treasure,
Whose key is only mine—
Oh, you were right indeed, you drunken
monsters:
The truth is found in wine.

This period which lasts considerably longer than the first reduces the poet to even keener disillusionment, to despair nigh to madness. Neither prayer, wild debauchery nor wine serve to stifle his pain.

But already during the Revolution of 1905 and later, the poet's thoughts turn more and more frequently to the people, to his country, to the theme of the revolution, the approach of which he conceives with unusual acuteness. In it he searches for a way out from that "terrible world" which surrounding reality is to him.

In the period of black reaction which set in after the 1905 Revolution Blok wrote a number of articles in which the voice of insistent conscience is heard.

"The reaction which has fallen to our share concealed from us the face of awakening life. Before our eyes are several generations despairing of their best hopes. Rarely, even amongst young people, will you meet any who are not sick to death at heart, but cover their faces with the old tiresome grimace of effeminacy, delicacy, self-love."

Alexander Blok considered that a great responsibility lay with the writers: "They must know that they are responsible because they are talented . . ." ". . . not one of them, as yet, has shown what is to be done with the worker and the peasant who are now, at this very moment, asking what is to be done." "It is only worth while thinking of great things, an author must set himself only great tasks."

Blok severely condemned the interminable religious-philosophical disputes in which intellectuals of the nobility and the bourgeoisie of those days engaged in eagerly and fruitlessly. "Instead of action," wrote the poet, "we have an ugly flow of words. . . ."

"And in the streets the wind blows, prostitutes freeze, the people starve, they are hanged, and reaction stalks the country. And it is difficult to live in Russia, cold and horrible. If all these chatterers were to vanish to a shadow as the result of their seekings nobody on earth except the effeminate, the unnecessary, Russia herself, would either lose or gain anything!"

Blok's works of those years are particularly tragic. His heart was wrung with pain. More and more frequently, he speaks of his grief and loneliness. He becomes more and more isolated from his circle. He sees that "Russia, . . . having emerged from one revolution, is looking eagerly towards another."

But what will that revolution bring? It must come in the nature of a popular revolt against that old Russia to which Blok himself belongs. He understood that he belonged to that intelligentsia which was divided from the people by the "impassable line."

Let it be so! Seeing how "the silence becomes filled with a distant and growing rumble, unlike the many-voiced roar of the city," Blok did not renounce the coming revolution.

"What if the three-in-hand, around which 'the torn air howls as the wind,' is *bearing straight down upon us?* Rushing to meet the people, we throw ourselves under the hooves of the runaway horses, to certain death." And nevertheless, he threw himself into the embraces of the people. He accepted the grim results of the revolution as a just vengeance. "Retribution" was the title he gave to his last unfinished poem which he began in 1911 and in which he attempted to draw a detailed picture from the seventies of the past century to the days when "anger was ripening in all hearts, and with the anger—youth and freedom."

When the October 1917 Revolution came, Blok welcomed it. He was not daunted by the fact that his estate "Shakhmatovo" was wrecked, that the people were meting out justice to the landlords. Blok was able to place the interests of the people above all else and to bow before them, to bless the "madly-galloping horses" whose hooves were ready to crush him also, he was able to understand the grandeur of the revolution, to sense the transformation which it brought. He wrote prophetically: "Russia is destined to live through torments, humiliation, partition; but she will emerge from these trials new, and more majestic." Blok sent out a call to the intelligentsia: "With all your hearts, with all your faculties, with all your senses—hearken to the revolution!" He accepted the revolution wholly: "Like a blizzard, like a whirlwind accompanying a thunderstorm, the Revolution always brings the new and unaccepted. Many it cruelly deceives, in its eddy, it easily wounds the worthy. It frequently carries the unworthy to dry land unharmed. But that is not the main thing, that does not alter either the general course of the torrent or the grim and overpowering roar of that torrent. Always, no matter when or how, that roar signifies something *great.*"

He lauded the revolution in his famous poem *The Twelve.* Nevertheless, for Blok personally the revolution remained only a torrent, a storm, a hurricane, an elemental upheaval.

Lauding the refreshing, transforming and renewing nature of the revolutionary storm, Blok was nevertheless unable wholly to understand the full richness of the positive meaning

of the socialist revolution. But having risen to the crest of the revolutionary wave and lauded it, Alexander Blok identified himself with the greatest revolution in history, rose to the heights of the people, and definitely cut himself off from their enemies.

Alexander Blok remained a romanticist. To him, art had always been and remained "a winged dream," "a mysterious aircraft in which to fly away from the earth."

He wrote about Richard Wagner that the latter "carried within himself the saving poison of creative contradictions which, as yet, the philistine civilization has not succeeded in reconciling, and which it will not succeed in reconciling, as their reconciliation is analogous to its own death" Blok could have applied those words to himself. He also carried within himself "the saving poison of creative contradictions", which he opposed to the philistine civilization. Blok saw the "meaning of human life . . . in trouble and anxiety," in ceaseless seekings, and in such he spent his whole life. He grieved and suffered in the clutches of the oppressing years of reaction, his work was permeated with this despair, this feeling of the "hopeless darkness" of life, but he strove for the light, for good, for freedom. He wrote to one of his correspondents: "If you like my poetry, ignore the poison and read the future in it. . . ."

The theme of doom, destruction, despair did not wholly absorb the poet to the exclusion of all else. He was not hopelessly pessimistic, through all his doubts and despair he carried the romantic dream of rebirth, of the future, the call to struggle.

In this "terrible world" his guiding star was his country. Love of country rings in his poetry with such vigour, with such passionate inspiration, that his cycle of poems about Russia belong to the best pages not only of his own work but of Russian and even world poetry.

He understood the significance of the homeland for the poet, hence, for himself. He said that "genius was always of the people." And having completed the poem *The Twelve* —his greatest achievement—devoted to the revolution, he wrote in his diary: "Today I am a genius."

In his cycle of poems *My Country* Alexander Blok expressed his almost ecstatic love for his native land. "My Russia! My Wife!" he exclaims. The Russian village, then poor and backward, was near and dear to the heart of the poet.

Russia, my life! are we tied to one fate for us?
Tsar! yes ó Siberia! Ermak and jail!
Does no repentance, no parting await for us?
To my free soul can your darkness avail?

But behind this impoverished peasant Russia, Blok saw the outlines of a new form: the creation of new towns, coal mines, metallurgical plants in the Donets steppes roused in him the thought of a new Russia.

He dreamed more and more eagerly of the new days that would dawn for his long-suffering people. This breathless expectancy was vividly reflected in his poem *The Vulture* written in 1916. As the vulture circles above an empty field, in a tiny hut a mother is teaching her son eternal submission.

Time passes. War returns. Rebellion rages
The farms and villages go up in flame,
And Russia in her ancient tear-stained beauty,
Is yet the same,
Unchanged through all the ages. How long will
The mother grieve and the kite circle still?

Blok's most mature lyric poetry belong to the period of 1907-1916. He himself groupe them in cycles: *The Terrible World, Retribution Iambics, Italian Poems, Harps and Vio lins, Carmen, My Country*, and so on. In thi same period he wrote *The Garden of Nightin gales*. The theme of this poem is that one can not escape from life into the "garden of night ingales, life thrusts you back but you retur too late, others have taken your place: i you forget life you will find that when yo return to it, life will have forgotten you, yo are no longer necessary.

Before the revolution, in addition to sever volumes of lyric poetry, Blok wrote a num b of romantic plays including *The Show-Boot The Unknown Lady, The King in the Squar The Rose and the Cross.*

Blok's plays are in the nature of lyric dr mas. Already in his student days he lov the theatre and even planned, at one tim to become an actor. His most successful pl was his first lyric drama *The Show-Boo* which appeared in 1906 and was staged the theatre of Vera Komissarzhevskaya, leading actress of the time. In *The Sho Booth* the poet cruelly ridicules his drea of the Beautiful Lady (La Belle Dame), t shafts of his satire are directed against t high-flown dreams of the mystics, such he himself had been, those waiting for t "Pale beloved"—death.

Another of his lyric dramas *The Unkno Lady* developed the theme of his famous po of the same title which opened his cycle demoniac, urban poems.

The third—*The King in the Square*—w a portrayal of the revolution of 1905 and t ensuing reaction.

In the form of his plays Blok follow the school of German romanticists of t 19th century, but he added the sentimen of loneliness, hopelessness and doom whi characterized his work of those years.

The apex of Blok's poetry and the ap of his mental growth is the poem *The Twe* written after the October Revolution whi as we have already said, the poet accept eagerly, as a long-desired elemental upheav as a cleansing storm. In this poem, Bl blessed the revolution. In its twelve chapt he conveys the fervour of the great torr of the revolutionary movement, its pov and force. The varied rhythms of the po correspond to the steadily changing pictur the language changes, revolutionary slog stand next to limericks, eloquent lines g place to street jargon.

The wild wind hurts,
Is mad and gay;
It blows the skirts,
Mows the passers-by,
Shakes, quakes and makes fly
The great placard away:
"All power to the Constituent Assembly."

Twelve Red Guards are the twelve apostles of the new world. The poet is undaunted by the fact that his apostles are not apostolic in their bearing, that they are splashed by the filth of the old world. It was not accidentally that Alexander Blok wrote that the roar of the revolution always portended something great. The waters of the revolutionary torrent may be turbid but it is a sacred element. And therefore, the poet concludes his poem with a vision of Christ marching in front of the twelve Red Guards. And with measured steps they march into the distance through wind and storm and blizzard. And the old world is portrayed as a mangy mongrel crouching timidly in the doorway.

On they march with sovereign tread,
With a starving dog behind,
With a blood-red flag ahead—
In the storm where none can see,
From the rifle bullets fire,

Gently walking through the snow,
Where the pearly snow-flakes blow,
Marches rose-crowned in the van
Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

Why did Blok place Christ at the head of the "twelve"?

His Christ is the Christ of the peasants and the poor, and the poet places him at the head of his Red Guards because at that time he could find nothing else with which to express his attitude to and acceptance of the revolution as something sacred.

In this period the poet also wrote his well-known poem *The Scythians* in which he appealed to Europe for brotherhood and peace.

Come unto us, from the black ways of war,
Come to our peaceful arms and rest.
Comrades, while it is not too late,
Sheathe the old sword. May brotherhood
be blest.

In the last years of his life Alexander Blok was engaged in extensive literary and cultural activities, took an active part in the organization of the Poets' Union, the Free Philosophical Society, the work of the theatre and publishing houses. In August 1921 a severe illness ended his life.

Alexander Blok discovered new, previously unknown possibilities in Russian poetry. He rejected the classic, exact rhymes and opened the road to assonance. He widened the accepted borders of poetical rhythm, used a purely tonic verse, introducing the "Dolnik"—a special form of tonic verse. Finally, an enormous role is played by the music of his poetry, its melody which facilitates the expression of hidden, lyrical sentiments.

The poem *The Twelve* left its imprint on Soviet poetry particularly during the first years. Blok originated the portrayal of the revolution and its heroes, both in poetry and prose, against the symbolic background of storm and blizzard.

From *The Twelve* a number of Soviet poets acquired the variety of changing rhythms, the rich poetical language combining the exalted and low, the lyric and the epic, the language of literature and of colloquial folklore.

Blok's great legacy still lives today. His sincere, passionate, searching and patriotic poetry will always find a response in the hearts of new generations of readers, will charm them by its power and beauty.

FYODOR LEVIN

THE GENERATION OF ALEXANDER BLOK

To our generation Alexander Blok was the writer who claimed all our thoughts and feelings from our schooldays. In him naturalness and unusualness were combined in such just proportions that it was obvious to anyone not totally devoid of sensibility that the precision and delicacy of his lexical material safeguarded him from any suggestion of banality, cheapness and falsification. At the same time, from the first acquaintance with his verses, you felt their tangibility, reality, volume. They had none of the verbal husks, the chaff, that so often assumes the form of that deceptive fullness of thought or description. They interested you at first sight by their total dissimilarity to anything you had previously read, to anything that had previously existed. This was in itself, the embodiment of immortality. The author himself might be remarkable or not, great or small, but his verses spoke of greatness as no others were doing. Bryusov established himself beside this poet: we loved Bryusov as a severe though exceptional teacher of poetry, as one who knew it in all its aspects from antiquity to the present day. We admired the way he defended Gogol from those who professed to see in him only the writer of everyday, humdrum things; we valued in Bryusov the sparkling thought, the ray-like penetration into the ages, the faculty for recreating bygone times and epochs by the logic of thought and knowledge. But Bryusov was the master of the side-arms of poetry; of its system of weights and measures. It gained him esteem but it led into history, into the museum and the library. Andrei Byely had more of the fantastic and of reality, but soon he passed into a philosophic dissipation of energy and mannerism sincere enough but hopeless. To follow him meant that one became a species of a "Bursch" of poetry,

that is, entered the school of Byely's verse and Byely's outlook on life. Neither in the one nor the other was there any freedom.

Blok alone placed no obligations on us save, perhaps, that we should not be bound by any poetical doctrine. This was his true criterion of poetry. And this it was that attracted the heart of youth to him, for youth sensed in him the enemy of routine and prejudice and therefore of shams. Blok drew us with his breadth of soul, the nobility of his poetic scope, his indifference to his personal destiny. In him we were conscious of the charm of a past generation whose existence the reader reverenced, even though he might not be acquainted with what it had written. Baratynsky and Tyutchev [1] were of this generation. And if a volume of these poets fell into the reader's hands, he kept it for a long time, if not forever. Not only the above-named writers, but Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy, the whole great family of Russian literary bogatyrs, was not alien to Blok. The all-embracing sense of his country in its full breadth and depth made him akin to this family. For he saw not merely the young birches and the snowy plains in her. The majestic ranges of the Caucasus, those "purple mountains" that Pushkin and Lermontov loved, that Vroubel raved about, and the sunlit white nights of *The Night Violet* [2], and the landscape of ancient Russia's limes, where "the poor and stunted villages are more than the eye can count or measure, and the fire in the far meadow lights the darkening day," and, lastly, that new Russia, "New America" the discovery of which belongs by right to Alexander Blok, the country "where the factory chimneys blacken the sky, where the factory-sirens moan": all these had been seen and assimilated by a poet who was avid for life, who had the passionate gaze of a poet, deeply in love with his own time, his own country. This did not mean that Blok was of a contemplative turn of mind and did not know which path to choose, with which camp to throw in his lot. He listened to the murmur of the whole people's voice, not to separate voices, though they might be those of the sapient and reasonable. Blok felt the hum of time, in which his finely-attuned ear distinguished the thing that he called the music of time. What was he intended to convey by this conception? The leitmotif, the leading melody that he alone heard in all its completeness and perfection. This melody is heard in the sleigh-driver's song, in peasant singing, its note was caught in the cry of the cranes flying southward, in the clink of the scythes in the fresh green meadow. It echoed in the voices of Russian writers, in the nightingale's starry outpouring of Pushkin, the deep organ notes of Leo Tolstoy. It sounded in Blok's voice like the rich honeyed sound of the violin and its mellowness lingered in the ears long after it had died away. And all this had a true kinship for us, it was something of our own, notwithstanding a certain strangeness at the beginning; like the first sight of the sea and the sky in childhood, when the starry night suddenly spreads overhead; thus, by the wood-smoke do you guess that people are near, and by the freshness of the dew—that morning is at hand. Blok had all these—the smoke of the camp fire, the freshness of morning meadows, the satisfying fragrance of newly-baked bread. It was this good nourishing bread of poetry that attracted young people to him in spite of the warnings of those who affected the poetry of logical rules. The opening of the century—the beginning of our acquaintance with Blok—is marked by a lightning charcoal sketch of the parting with the "age of gas":

A little black man ran through the town
He extinguished the lanterns, climbing a ladder
Dawn was approaching, white and slow
With the strange little man it climbed the ladder
Where quiet, soft shadows had sheeted the town
Where the yellow strips of the lamps had been sleeping
Morning twilight up on the steps lay down
Into the curtains, into the door cracks creeping

Strange lines, disregarding correct scanning, the subject—an everyday one, it would seem, yet at the same time there is something far more significant in them than is apparent at the first inattentive glance. But in the eyes of the poetry-loving youth of the time, eagerly scrutinizing the outlines of the world, much more was reflected than could be discerned by those who persecuted and ridiculed Blok for his "decadence". Those eyes reflected the end of a century, the end of night and the breaking of the dawn, and the role of the black man, the manual worker, who put out the hissing gas lamps, no longer needed, of the age of gas.

Thus was Blok first received. It was in 1903. We heard a clear voice and we believed at once in that childlike, pure and open heart. How could we but believe a voice of such truth and purity.

Pipes on the bridge struck up to play;
Flowers tipt the apple-spray;
And one green star, aloft, away,
Uplifted by an angel, lay.
Miraculous, on the bridge today
To look into the deeps that stay
Aloft, so far away!

The pipe sings loud, the star climbs high
(Now, shepherd, homeward ply!)
Beneath the bridge the wave sings by:—
"Ah, look, how fast the waters go!
(Forget for ever all thy care)
Thou never saw'st so deep a flow,
So lucid, anywhere. . . .
Or listened'st to such deeps below
Of silence, anywhere. . . .

Ah, look how fast the waters go;
When didst thou dream it? Dost thou know?

Then came the memorable stormy years of the first Russian Revolution. Our acquain

[1] Russian poets of the 19th century.
[2] A cycle of Blok's verses.

tance with Blok strengthened and became kinship, the kinship of a common destiny, common feelings. The creative work of the man became accustomed, the movement of his verse necessary, the only living thing among the mummies and the wax figures; it was living in its sound and in its feeling. It was directed against the "well-fed", it became the defender of those "whom none pity."

His verses against the "well-fed" were written when the first all-Russian strike shadowed the self-satisfied faces of the society around him. He parted without fear from this society when he understood the "boredom of their stiff dinners," the tedium of their ghastly parody of life.

And he recorded forever his sense of time. No one possessed a voice of such a pitch as to take and return this never-to-be-repeated thing. It remained in his poetry. Blok's poem *The Meeting* has never been fully appreciated, yet it lives as a witness of the lasting affinity between poetry and revolution.

Blok gave us a portrait of an orator, a political tribune of the year 1905, a man who had just returned from banishment, and who bore upon him the dark shadow of the Siberian prisons and mines. That was why his eyes still held no light, that was why he was . . . "grey, like the vault of the night".

The scene of the dastardly murder by an agent provocateur, the man lying dead and the soldier with his rifle, standing over the body, these things were noted instantaneously by the inward eye. This poet breathed confidently "the night freshness of freedom." His readers breathed this freshness, too. It meant much—to see the birth of this freedom not only in proclamations and demonstrations, but also in its spiritual form, born out of the voice of a poet. So, without realizing it, he became a highly-qualified political agitator. "I fling myself from the heavens of poetry into Communism," Mayakovsky wrote. But perhaps Mayakovsky's emergence would not have been so definite and so swift, had it not been for Blok's verses. They taught us much and compelled us to probe into the meaning of many things.

But Mayakovsky and Blok should be discussed in another place. Here we may only remind the reader that they undoubtedly influenced one another. In the first place, the civic sense suggested in Blok's poetry, his passionate sincerity, was the principle that stirred Mayakovsky's deepest feelings. Proof of this is the repeated application of Blok's imagery to his own feelings.

For example, the lines from the tragedy *Man*, a mature thing of Mayakovsky's about the "undying fire of unthinkable love," or the image of the "wooden bride"—the violin, or the rhythm of one of the chapters from the same *Man*—all this is very close to Blok.

Blok undoubtedly had an influence on the formation of the media of expression in Mayakovsky's poetry. The reverse process is no less illustrative. If we remember the abrupt change in Blok's lexicon and syntax during his search for the new, his effort to create something that embraced widely the elemental in the people, the crest of that tide that rose to the height of the October Revolution, we must turn to Mayakovsky's practice. Blok undoubtedly rearranged the media of his influence, and sought a wide outlet to the human sea. In its emotional quality, its language, its revolutionary impassioned mood, his *The Twelve* has something in common with the poems of Mayakovsky, and shows a structure that differed from all that was customary in Blok.

Mayakovsky was not the only poet who felt his influence. Blok had, to a greater or lesser degree, a formative effect on all the more important poets of the following generation. Sergei Esenin would not have been what he was, when he was formed and minted, had it not been for Blok. Only through Blok and after him did Heine become possible in Russian. I am not speaking of the less characteristic effects that were coloured by the powerful melody of Blok.

Thus the poetic foundation of the century grew and developed. The departures from it, if there were any, were of a fortuitous and unconvincing nature. Blok knew the finest shades of the Russian language. The variety of colouring, the impassioned feeling, and a kind of lambent radiance in his poetic character gave us firm support in this: that even after Pushkin not all the possibilities of Russian verse were exhausted, though this had been instilled into us from childhood. The idea was—write like Pushkin, in any case nothing better will be done, but let us have something resembling it at least. This false and disheartening doctrine, preached by cold and indolent souls, was first attacked by Alexander Blok. For this and for the unforgettable voice that rang out at the dawn of the century, rousing us to unrest, his native land will ever be grateful, and will raise to him a lasting memorial that the generations to come may feel anew the dewy freshness and purity of Blok's poetry.

NIKOLAI ASEYEV

CONSTANTINE SIMONOV

Events crowding in one upon the other, thick and fast. A kaleidoscope of places. Swift journeys through his native land, and travels abroad to the east and west, always abreast of events. Such was the pattern of the life of Constantine Simonov during the breathless rush of the past ten years, which provided the contents and colour of his works.

It is only ten years since Simonov began to write and before us already lies a goodly pile of books—poems, volumes of lyric verses, a novel, feature stories—published in eighteen languages in editions totalling eleven million copies. His six plays are being shown at scores of theatres. And he has written scripts for four films. What tireless energy in the search for new impressions, and how swiftly it bore fruit!

Notwithstanding an external motley of themes and variety of genres, we always find three principal themes in Simonov's works. One, Russia, her interests, her present and her future; two, the artistic image of the hero of our day, the affirmation of the Russian national character, enriched by the qualities of the Man of the Socialist epoch and, three, love—the subject of his lyric poems.

Everything that comes from Simonov's pen deals with questions that interest and stir his contemporaries and compatriots. Simonov's success can be appreciated only if viewed in the light of events of the past ten years. With every year the danger to the freedom and independence of the peace-loving nations had been growing more tangible. Not only did the aggressors attack individual countries, they aimed at the physical extermination of entire nations. One after the other the democratic lands were enslaved by the fascists. The events in Europe deeply affected and agitated the freedom-loving Soviet peoples.

Simonov's works helped to mobilize the thoughts and feelings of his readers for the just war against the aggressor. The more so since his ideal was the soldier of freedom, the soldier of socialism, who was also the beloved of the people.

Simonov's immediate reactions to the events that stirred the country were shown by the large number of works. He wrote much not only because of the urge of his creative energy and of his temperament, but chiefly because of the desire effectively and directly to influence the events of his time through his literary effort.

Constantine Simonov who is thirty years old, became independent at an early age. After school, he worked as a turner in an aircraft factory, then as a mechanic in a film studio. From 1934 to 1937 he was a student of the Institute of Literature of the Union of Soviet Writers, a higher educational institution founded upon the initiative of Maxim Gorky for the education of young writers. Already as a student, at the age of twenty, Simonov won the Order of the Badge of Honour for his literary work. During the war, he was thrice awarded the Stalin Prize. He holds many battle decorations.

Simonov was an eye-witness and participant of the battles at Khalkin-Gol at the time of the Japanese attack on the Mongolian Peoples Republic; he took part in the war against Finland in 1939; and finally as war correspondent of the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) he covered the decisive sectors of the vast Soviet-German front stretching from the Barents to the Black seas. He visited Jugoslavia, Albania, Italy, France, Czechoslovakia Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Japan, the United States and Canada. The poet's biography is linked with the most stirring events of the war and post-war period.

Simonov made his debut in literature as a poet. Several volumes of lyric verse, a poem in the form of love letters, two heroic poems on subjects from Russian history are the chief works of the first years of his writing. In those same years, Simonov translated a cycle of Rudyard Kipling's poems into Russian. Afterwards he turned to play writing. *A Love Story* and *A Lad From Our Town* are the two plays written before the war. The war turned him to publicist writing and feature stories as the swiftest and most effective means of reacting to the events of those grim years. The result were four volumes of feature stories and articles, entitled *From the Barents to the Black Seas, Jugoslav Note-Book, Czechoslovak Note-Book* and *Extracts From a War Diary*. But the impressions accumulated during the war could not be expressed either in poetry, feature stories or dramas. They demanded a more monumental and freer form of expression. And Simonov wrote his novel *Days and Nights* devoted to the defense of Stalingrad.

2

The poem *The Battle on the Ice* was Simonov's first work which drew the attention of the readers and critics. The author chose as his subject the history of the Novgorod Prince, Alexander Nevsky, and the battle of the Russian troops with the Livonians on the ice of Lake Peipus at the beginning of the 13th century. This battle decided the fate of northwestern Russia, which at that time was the object of the armed expansion of the German cur-knights. However, this reverting to events of seven centuries ago was made for the sake of the most acute and pressing problems of the present day.

The poem was written five or six years before the Hitlerites' attack on the Soviet Union and already then it was full of presentiment of the coming battles.

Year by year, Simonov writes, and century by century the Germans gnawed at the Russian border, methodically and systematically, "like tireless mice." They resorted to every means in order to dribble through, "now by trade," "now with the cross," "now with the sword." Through the lips of Alexander Nevsky, the poet tells us that "he will be stupid" who hearing this, "draws the sword too late" in order to stop the invasion of the Germans, devastating "like the plague."

His next and, thus far, last historical work is the poem *Suvorov*.

The image of the great Russian general interested Simonov as an example of unswerving and untiring will to victory. It was not accidental that in describing the tragic conditions of the march across the St. Gothard Pass the poet wrote:

"Amidst the sufferings and privations,
Amidst the rocks and mountains of snow,
The soldiers knew without fail, that the Russians would pass everywhere."

When writing of World War II, Simonov was interested in the same heroic features of the Russian national character, which hitherto had attracted him in the annals of Russian history. In a cycle of poems headed *From a Front-Line Note-Book* the poet extols the staunchness and fearlessness of the Russian soldier.

One of the most characteristic poems in this cycle is *The Comrade*. Fourteen lines of verse, written in calm, narrative style, tell how on the fifth day of the offensive, on the fifth day of the march Westward, a Red Army man fell, fighting, with his face to the West. The poet recalls the mother who will "weep through many bitter days." He understands that her grief is inconsolable. But her son did not die a coward, he fell like a hero.

"It is easier to die with the face to the West."

The poem *The Infantry-Man* describes how a soldier marches half a mile under fire, tired to the point of exhaustion, over ground where the "snow is mixed with blood and ashes." But surmounting these great difficulties, the soldier acquires still greater strength, Simonov writes:

"And now you are sure, that once such half a mile you could traverse, then, the entire land you'll soon traverse."

A still more characteristic poem from the same cycle is *The Attack*. Here Simonov describes how immeasurably difficult it is, both psychologically and physically, for an infantry-man, lying on the ground under hurricane fire to tear himself away from this cold earth and, rising to his full height, go into attack. To cross this "last thirty metres, where death stands side-by-side with life" is the great exploit. After this exploit when "your bayonet has again brought you to the German trench," the most terrible part is over, and fearlessness means just the habit of becoming accustomed to danger.

In another of his cycles *With You and Without You*, the poet, speaking of the fate of the soldier and the chances of his death, counsels the beloved "when the time comes" for her son, like him, to go to the defense of the homeland, "in bidding him farewell" to recall him "as a soldier".

But no matter how acute the sensation of war and of the military profession is in Simonov's verses, never for a moment does Simonov forget the aims of the war, its meaning, justice, the mission of the Soviet people in defending the world against enslavement and destruction. His poem *Kill Him*, which is, as it were, a declaration of these aims, has won wide fame. The poet says "if you love your home," "if you love your mother," "if you have not forgotten your father," "if you are sorry" for your old schoolteacher, if you do not want to part from your sweetheart, if you do not want to give up your homeland, if you do not want all this to be defiled, humiliated, tortured, then "kill him," the fascist, who is attempting to destroy all this. The poem was published during the war when all about which the poet wrote was reality to some and direct menace to others. Written in stiff rhythm, deliberately unmelodious, the poem breathes hatred and scorn for the enemies of mankind.

Simonov's heroes are men of will power and energy, men with a sense of duty, who give themselves up to the cause heart and soul. Nature and objects are described concretely and tersely in his poetry. He never stops to indulge in the beauty of the landscape, to draw the reader's attention to a rare harmony of colours, to the unexpected appearance of any given object. Simonov is too dynamic for this. He is less interested in nature than in an episode in the life of his contemporaries or of his country. His poetry is always full of meaning, movement and action, and frequently bears the accent of the publicist.

3

To Simonov the national character has always been identical with the concept of the national hero. The poem *The Battle on the Ice* portrays two such heroes—the Pskov armourer, Ontsifer Tucha and the Novgorod Prince, Alexander Nevsky. In these two, Simonov, for the first time, embodied those qualities of the Russian character which he later confirmed and developed in the heroes of almost all his subsequent works. The will to action, selfless devotion to duty and the homeland, impetuous but purposeful courage, and heroism expressed in an exploit which

is the manifestation of these qualities— such are the characteristics of Simonov's heroes. And nearly all of them are soldiers. Some are generals, outstanding military leaders of Russian history, as Alexander Nevsky and Suvorov, others are officers, soldiers and partisans of our days, such as Lukonin in the play *A Lad From Our Town*, Safonov in the play *The Russians*, Saburov in the novel *Days and Nights* and Savelyev in the play *So It Will Be*. The heroes of Simonov's lyric verses are also soldiers. And as a soldier, Simonov himself appears before his readers as author and main character in his *Excerpts From a War Diary*.

All these characters express one and the same moral—the healthy, sane moral of the man of duty, the man of well-understood ideals, purposeful and unsparing of self in struggle.

In Simonov's dramatic works, too, the characters represent the author's same ideal— the energetic man, whose thoughts bear fruit, whose reactions are always swift, whose actions are direct and straight. His dramaturgical style changes with each play, but the permanent, as it were "unchanging" image of his central character remains the same; he has only matured and become tempered in the fire of battle.

His play, *A Lad From Our Town* is the story of Sergei Lukonin, a mischievous lad, with the reputation of being wild, but talented and resourceful, daring and honest, faithful to his attachments. Lukonin grows up before the eyes of the audience and becomes a soldier in the war against fascism.

The action of Simonov's best and most popular play *The Russians* is laid in a Soviet town, besieged by the Germans. Its characters are a small group of ordinary people who withstand the force of the enemy by their courage and endurance. The characters in the play are Marfa Petrovna, a Russian woman, who has devoted her life to bringing up her son and looking after her orchard; Valya, a young girl, artless as "the bluebells of the steppe"; the writer Panin who is accustomed to carry in his holsters "not a revolver, but eau-de-cologne and a toothbrush"; the ex-soldier Vasin; the merry surgeon's assistant Globa; three nameless old men who come to get their rifles. "In the last German war, you see, we were over age, but in this, never mind our age came back again! . ." And chief among these personages is Captain Safonov, "in the past, very likely, a rough fellow" and now "a deathless hero".

One after the other, the brown plague attacks these fearless Soviet people, but they do not surrender. They perish, strong in the knowledge that their struggle has borne fruit, that it has laid the foundation for the future victory.

It should be remembered that this play was written at the beginning of 1942, at the time when the fascists still stood in the heart of Russia, near the gates of Moscow, on the banks of the Don, in the Crimea. The play grips us even now, but at that time this hymn to the unbreakable Russian resistance made a particularly profound impression.

The action of *So It Will Be* takes place on the eve of the final rout of fascist Germany. Colonel Savelyev, a mature man of forty, who lost his wife and child during the first days of the war, comes to Moscow for a few days. Unable to find accommodations in a hotel, he goes to his old apartment to which he had determined never to return. Here he finds the family of the architect Vorontsov who moved into the flat when their own house was bombed out. Savelyev remains with the family and in the love of Vorontsov's young daughter, who has lost her fiancé at the front, the hope of once again acquiring a family returns to him. Simonov shows how wounds inflicted by the war are gradually healed.. The author's assertion of life in the play is declarative and emphatic. Hence the action unfolds straightforwardly, as it were, and the dialogue has a deliberate tendency towards polemics. But written and produced at a time when men who had lost their families, were returning from the front when countless fathers and husbands began to realize that they would never find their families, the directness and sincerity with which the theme of the healing of the wounds was treated assumed social significance and the play enjoyed popularity.

So It Will Be is a drama with a skilfully drawn plot and a small number of personages, each one of whom has a distinct function. From the point of view of composition, this is one of Simonov's most mature works.

Beneath the Chestnuts of Prague is Simonov's first post-war play. The action is laid in the capital of Czechoslovakia on the day of its liberation from the fascist invaders and in the weeks following it. The heroes are Czech intellectuals. (The play has been published in English in No. 2, 1946 of the magazine *Soviet Literature*.) One of the characters, the Soviet colonel Petrov, who stands somewhat apart from the main events, but who influences their course, is a further development of Simonov's favourite hero, with his strong direct character, whom we have met in the plays *A Lad From Our Town* (Lukonin), *Russian People* (Safonov); and *So It Will Be* (Savelyev). He has now become more mature and gained more experience; he is no longer a man inspired by personal heroism; he is a military and political leader.

4

Simonov first began to write prose in the days of the war. His feature stories and reportage from the front always held the public attention as living and truthful pictures of real events. The four volumes of feature stories and reportage are eloquent evidence of the writer's powers of observation.

Simonov's *Days and Nights* deals with Stalingrad, the epic battle which turned the tide of the war. The novel has the same merits as his plays and poetry: accuracy, laconic language, dramatic content and a swift flow of events. It stresses the activity, courage and purposefulness of the characters.

Days and Nights is a tale of the rank-and-file defenders of Stalingrad, of the popular essence of this defense, of the heroism of the people who were able to hold out in such a battle and come out the victors. The lead

ing character, Captain Saburov, battalion commander, is detailed to recapture three houses from the Germans, these being of great significance for the defense of the city. After immense difficulty and with heavy losses Saburov captures the three buildings in the beginning, the Germans succeed first in cutting one of the buildings off from the other two, and then all three from the main forces of the defenders. Long days and nights pass, a prolonged, intense, stubborn and difficult battle is waged in which mortal danger accompanies the strenuous and exhausting labour.

The fate of Saburov, and his men, the defense of Stalingrad, the characters of different Russian people are described in the novel. Saburov's thoughts about war and peace, his relations with the people around him, with the girl whom he meets in Stalingrad, reveal the full depth of feeling, the laws governing human actions, without an understanding of which we cannot comprehend the victory of the Red Army. Incidentally, this is the main purpose of every work of art dealing with the Great Patriotic War against Germany.

In Saburov and his comrades we see the contemporary Russian character, expressive of the high moral standard achieved in the course of the quarter of a century of Soviet rule.

The reader always appreciates the author's ability to understand and reveal the true meaning and significance behind events and actions. In his book, Simonov has shown how the iron discipline of the Red Army is founded on the system of profoundly democratic relations, of true patriotic comradeship existing between the Soviet generals, officers and soldiers.

This is a novel of the grim days of the war, of the arduous work of the Red Army that was going on day by day, through many long months. Persistence, ceaseless, undying effort, the constant expenditure of vast amounts of energy, the readiness to give all physical and mental strength—this fills the lives of his heroes and therein lies their exploit.

The novel more than any other genre offers the author the opportunity of depicting his character in great detail, of showing his reactions to all aspects of life. Therefore Saburov is drawn with much deeper and wider psychological insight than the characters in Simonov's dramas. Saburov is, first and foremost, a man of action, practical and accustomed to put all his thoughts and ideas into action. He does not regard courage as a thing apart, which has to be approached by means of reflection and reasoning. Courage is an organic part of him; will power is his chief quality, hence he values it above all else in the people around him. Saburov puts no demands on life, but from himself and those around him he demands unconditional fulfillment of duty which he conceives as social, as patriotic duty.

5

Love lyrics form a small but important part of Simonov's works. His cycle of love lyrics contains one poem which has won wide popularity—*Wait For Me* (see *International Literature* No. 3-4, 1942).

Notwithstanding its profoundly intimate nature this poem turned out to be a call to patriotic action. At the very beginning of the war, when the country was swept into movement, when husbands, fathers and sons went to defend its western borders and, bleeding the German army, fell back preparing for the decisive battles, while mothers and children sought safety, deep in the interior, in those days separation came to many hearts who had never thought to live apart. It was then that Simonov's poem *Wait for Me* came to be heard.

The poem speaks of faithfulness in love, of belief and attachment which are stronger than the externals of life. It is written in the form of an adjuration in which the word "wait" is repeated constantly, as though acquiring a magic force. And the fate of this poem was the most honourable that can befall any work of art. It became a part of the people, it was learned by heart, copied out, sung to all manner of tunes, quoted in personal letters and spoken as a parting vow by lovers.

Whatever the theme, whether patriotic, social or historical Simonov always stresses the fighting qualities of man, the qualities of heroism and will power. And these propensities in man determine the slow, rigid rhythm of his lines, their staccato beat, their firm and persistent, sometimes even sharp alliteration of consonants. Simonov's love lyrics on the other hand are always full of yearning, an acknowledgment of the inevitability of this feeling.

What are the objects of Simonov's love lyrics? He does not sing in them the romantically exalted image of his beloved, but the very earthly sensual love of a man, and the desire for the beloved born of this feeling.

Simonov's post-war lyrics were written during his travels abroad. Wherever his hero wanders he carries with him in his heart the love of the homeland, in foreign lands he yearns for Russia, for Soviet habits and customs. His lyrics are distinguished by a directness of expression. He does not resort to the language of images, but speaks concretely expressing his feelings and thoughts in a way reflecting his own manliness and energy, the sound clarity of his reasoning.

6

Such, in brief, is the variegated art of Constantine Simonov. For a writer, who has not yet travelled even half of his literary road, for an author of only ten years' standing, Simonov has, indeed, won a worthy place in literature.

In addition to his purely literary talent, Simonov possesses yet another gift. With remarkable intuition he feels the approach and the maturing of new social problems and anticipates the coming changes in the interests of his country. In literature he has posed many a problem which later held the attention of the Soviet public.

Simonov's talent is many-sided and diverse. No limiting term should be sought for in defining his creative art which is still in the process of development and from which we may expect much in the years to come.

ELENA MIKHAILOVA

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND RUSSIAN SOCIETY IN 18th CENTU

Benjamin Franklin was the first American writer and statesman to win popularity with the Russian reading public. His discoveries were well known to the Russian scientific world of the second half of the 18th century. Alexander Radishchev, the great Russian writer and revolutionary, in his book *A Journey From Petersburg to Moscow*, published in 1790, spoke highly of America's foremost citizen and scientist, paying him tribute in the chapter devoted to Lomonosov.

For this book, Radishchev was subsequently arrested, tried and exiled. Empress Catherine II who read the book like an "investigating magistrate", took exception, among others, to the lines on Franklin. Khrapovitsky, the empress' state secretary, writes in his diary that Catherine "deigned to say that he (Radishchev) was a rebel worse than Pugachev pointing out to me that at the end he praises Franklin as a conspirator and presents himself in the same light."

Radishchev spoke of Franklin as of the man "who tore the thunder from the skies and the sceptre from the hands of the tsars," using the translation of the Latin line "eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrum que tyrannis," inscribed by Turgot under Franklin's portrait during the latter's residence in Paris as American minister. A more exact translation would have been "... from the hands of the tyrants," as indeed the line has always been translated by the French. In the enlightened literature of the epoch the word "tyrant" meant an "evil monarch" or usurper, and the "enlightened monarchs" (princes éclairés), as Louis XVI and Catherine II considered themselves to be, did not in any way apply this word to themselves. Radishchev made a free translation of Turgot's lines lending them that openly republican meaning which they had acquired in France during the years of the revolution.

In her copy of *A Journey* Catherine underlined the words "tore the thunder from the skies and the sceptre from the hands of the tsars" and marked them with a cross on both sides of the margin. Further, in her notes on the book, on which Radishchev's trial, that ended in his being exiled to Siberia, was based, the empress wrote: "It appears that he (Radishchev) has appointed himself chieftain to tear the sceptre from the hands of the tsars with the aid of his book or in any other way."

2

The name of Franklin and the first news of his wonderful scientific discovery was made known to the Russian public by a report which appeared in the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti* in the summer of 1752 and contained a description of the lightning-conductor invented by Franklin.

This invention aroused lively interest in scientific circles in Petersburg, moreover since Lomonosov, Rikhman and several other academicians had also been engaged in the study of atmospheric electricity. Within a month of the appearance of the report, Rikhman submitted a paper to the Academy in

УЧЕНІЕ
ДОБРОДУШНАГО
РИХАРДА.

Въ Санктпетербургѣ
Печатано въ вольной типографіи у Карла Шнора 1784 года

Title page

which he spoke of Franklin's experimen The *Vedomosti* carried reports of Ri man's own experiments which fully confi ed Franklin's discovery.

Speaking of the achievements of science his poem *A Letter on Use of Glass*, publis at the end of 1752, Lomonosov wrote: "C the universe the news has spread, lightn arrows no longer danger breed," which, course, was an allusion to Franklin's covery.

Up to the outbreak of the War of Indep dence in America, amongst the wide cir of the Russian public Franklin's name connected with this "cunning device m by the hands of man"—the lightning-c ductor.

3

In December 1776, Russian readers fo a note in the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti* to effect that "the renowned Doctor Franklin arrived in France on board an Ameri cutter."

Both Russian newspapers—the Peterst and Moscow *Vedomosti*—devoted much tention to the revolutionary events in Ar ica from the very beginning. The Americ were considered rebels against the la sovereign, but along with the English a

merican reports, the newspapers carried ar-
cles taken from the French pro-American
ress, and these mutually opposed accounts
nabled the reader either to censure or sym-
athize with the Americans as he chose.
lowever, "Doctor Franklin" was beyond all
rguments or doubts. His words and actions
ere neither censured nor even disputed:
ey were simply presented to the reader for
pproval. This attitude towards Franklin
eflected that of a considerable part of Eu-
opean public opinion, and for the Russian
eader could not but serve as an indirect argu-
ent in favour of the American revolution.
As American minister to France Franklin
as more than a statesman. Russian readers
new that he was a philosopher and "bene-
actor of the human race."

Russian newspapers printed articles about
he new discovery made by the "famous
Ir. Franklin, which makes it possible to
reserve flour and sugar from decay during
sea voyage"—(this was the discovery of
ermetic sealing). The newspapers noted that
ll Franklin's experiments in physics were
esigned to "benefit human society." (*St.
'etersburg Vedomosti*, No.33, 1781.) Mention
s again made of Franklin when a new method
f smelting gold is referred to: "It appears
hat the American minister Mr. Franklin,
espite the many cares and labours connect-
d with the organization of a new state, still
inds time to experiment in physics in which
ield his name is no less famous than in the
ew American republic." (*St. Petersburg Ved-
mosti*, No. 50, 1783.)

Among the articles in the series *Notes on
'ertain Famous Men of Our Country*, print-
d at the end of the war in 1783, in the *Mos-
ovskie Vedomosti*, the essay on Franklin
vas particularly full of praise. "Distance forms
he perspective and, if we may say, the
orizon of great men and after a few centuries
Franklin will be honoured as a divinity. Elec-
ricity entirely changes physics; British set-
lements in America entirely change the po-
itical world. Franklin was responsible for
oth these changes, and by this he has
arned two of the foremost places with
osterity." (No. 63, 1783.)

American independence was won and in
785 Franklin returned to his native land.
This important event did not escape the at-
ention of Russian newspapers.

The *Moskovskie Vedomosti* printed a French
eport: "Dr. Franklin, minister of the United
American states, is preparing to return home.
n him, politicians are losing a gifted minis-
er, scientists—an outstanding experimenter,
nd citizens—a model of all public virtues.
Mr. Jefferson has been appointed to take his
lace in Paris." (No. 45, 1785.)

In November the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti*
rought the following report from America:
"The venerable Dr. Franklin finally arrived
ere the day before yesterday. . . He was wel-
omed as the protector and defender of the
omeland; pennants were hoisted on all ships,
ncluding the British. The people accompa-
ied him to the door of his house, with joyous
xclamations, weeping and calling him their
ather, friend and benefactor. . ." (No. 92,
785.)

In the years following the American revo-
lution, Franklin's works and articles about
him began to appear not only in the scientif-
ic but in the general Russian press of the time.

Already in 1776, the *St. Petersburg Vest-
nik*, a journal near to academic circles, print-
ed an article *On the Colours of Dresses* (from
Mr. Franklin's letters), these being excerpts
from one of Franklin's letters to Miss Ste-
venson. In the same year, the Petersburg
weekly *Peterburgskoye Ezhenedelnoye Soch-
nenie* of June 4th carried an anonymous trans-
lation of *La Science du Bonhomme Richard*
which had appeared in France that year.

In 1780 the *St. Petersburg Vestnik* (part 6,
p. 38) printed Franklin's own famous epi-
taph in which he compared his dead body
to the binding of an old book from which the
pages had been torn out.

No. 31 of the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* of
1785 carried *An Epitaph to a Squirrel Maul-
ed by a Dog*—an excerpt from Franklin's
letter to Georgiana Shipley.

In 1786, the first Russian provincial pe-
riodical *Uedinenny Peshekhonets*, published
in Yaroslavl, printed an *Allegorical and Phil-
osophical Letter From Mr. Franklin to Mrs. B.*
This was *The Ephemera*, one of Franklin's
most remarkable essays, written in Paris.
In August 1788, the *Novie Ezhemesyachnie
Sochinenya* printed *Dr. Franklin's Report on
the Hospitability of the North Americans* being
the second part of Franklin's famous article
on the North American Indians in which he
defended the latter and exposed the white
traders who robbed the natives. As early as
1784, *La Science du Bonhomme Richard* was
published in Petersburg in a separate edition.
By the end of the century, two more transla-
tions appeared of this most popular of Frank-
lin's articles.

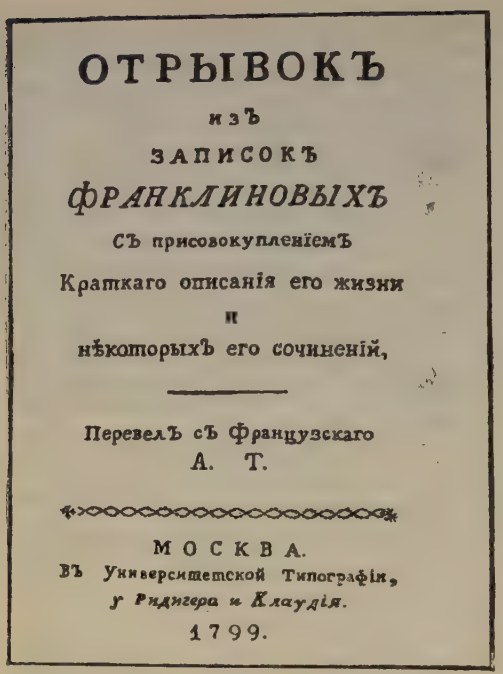
The educated public read Franklin's works
in French and also in the original. Various
editions of his works were to be found in
the libraries of those times, book-sellers ad-
vertised them in the newspapers. In 1786 the
magazine *Zerkalo Sveta* which devoted much
attention to American affairs in general,
printed a detailed account of the London
edition of Franklin's works, published in
1784, mentioning certain political articles
and speeches that could not be printed in
Russia owing to the censor's prohibition.

4

The personal ties between Franklin and
contemporary Russian society were very
weak. This was due in the main to Catherine's
negative attitude to the American revolution
and to Franklin. Catherine's hostile attitude
toward Franklin was well known. One of
the first entries in Khrapovitsky's diary
states that Catherine, pointing to Franklin's
portrait, said: "I do not like him."

There is nothing surprising in this. In the
eyes of the world Franklin represented the
ripening revolution against the "ancient régi-
me". Just as he drew the attention and sym-
pathy of all progressive-minded persons, he
aroused fear and enmity amongst the pillars
of absolutism.

Catherine abhorred Franklin's republican-
ism (her attitude towards Rousseau was the
same). She had no wish to idealize Franklin



ОТРЫВОКЪ

изъ

ЗАПИСОКЪ

ФРАНКЛИНОВЫХЪ

Съ присовокупленіемъ

Краткаго описанія его жизни

и

нѣкоторыхъ его сочиненій,

Перевелъ съ Французскаго

А. Т.

МОСКВА.

Въ Университетской Типографіи,

у Ридигера и Клаудія.

1799.

Title page

and the Americans, and not being particularly interested, as was the French court, she preferred to consider "le bonhomme Richard" a dangerous and cunning republican politician. The Russian official representatives in Paris, naturally, reflected their empress' views in their attitude towards Franklin.

However, Franklin's meetings with Russians were not limited to official acquaintances. In 1778 he met the famous Russian playwright Denis Fonvisin in Paris as we learn from Fonvisin's letters to his sister.

At the beginning of 1780 the princess Catherine Dashkova arrived in Paris. Already in Scotland she had made the acquaintance of Franklin's English friends Adam Smith and the historian Robertson. In Paris she also moved in circles near to Franklin. In her memoirs she recalls that she frequently visited the abbé Raynal and there she met the great American who, it seems, had also sought this acquaintance. As a result of this meeting Princess Dashkova was elected member of the Philadelphia Philosophical Society. "Moved by a feeling of respect and friendship for me," writes Dashkova in her memoirs "he (i. e., Franklin) nominated me for membership of the highly renowned and famous philosophical society in Philadelphia, to which I was elected unanimously: I had already held the diploma of this society which had sent me their works at every opportunity... I considered him (Franklin) an outstanding personality; he combined profound knowledge with simplicity in his dealings and sincere modesty, thanks to which he was very kindly disposed to others."

In 1789 Franklin was elected member the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. T circumstances connected with his electi to this body are of considerable interest. November 4th, 1789, Dashkova, the pres dent of the Academy, sent a letter to Fran lin in Philadelphia in which she wrote th having learnt with surprise that he (Fran lin) was not a member of the St. Petersbu Academy of Sciences, she had taken immec ate measures to "secure this honour for t academy."

The minutes of the Academy session of N vember 2nd, 1789, contain the following shc notice: "After the princess Dashkova had nc ed with surprise that the famous Benjam Franklin was not a foreign member of t Academy, his candidacy was submitted the secretary, at her highness' proposal, a this venerable and esteemed scientist w unanimously elected."

The "honorary members of the Acaden residing in foreign countries (associés ext nes)" included literally all European m of learning up to Holbach. It is hard to e plain why Franklin, whom rarely a forei scientific society or academy did not stri to enroll, was not a member of the Russi Academy of Sciences. It is possible that was due to an accident according to Dashk va and the minutes of the Academy, but is more probable that Catherine's dislike Franklin, of which the academicians cou not but be aware, was responsible for it. H belated election at the moment when t French revolution had already begun, c apparently only be explained by Dashkova personal initiative, and it must have be regarded in Russian court circles at that p riod as politically tactless. The acaden cians, doubtlessly, elected Franklin with ple sure, but only on the responsibility of th president.

When Franklin died six months later, t atmosphere was already so charged with t events of the French revolution that the a titude of Russian official circles towar Franklin's posthumous fame became infl enced thereby.

After the fall of the Bastille, the Ame cans began to be regarded as the "teacher of the French.

According to Masson,[1] Catherine, unc the influence of the French events, announc at that late date a sharply hostile attitu towards the American revolution, "call Washington a rebel and publicly declar that no man of honour would wear the orc of Cincinnati."

On June 21st, the *St. Petersburg Vedomo* printed the first report of Franklin's dea "A report from Philadelphia states that well-known Dr. Franklin, who for some ti was the minister of the independent Americ colonies to France, died in Philadelphia April 17th in his eighty-sixth year." On J 5th the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti* came with a sharp article, reading as follo "Count Mirabeau, informing the Natio

[1] Masson, *Mémoires secrets sur la Rus* Paris, 1800.

Assembly on the 11th of this month (the report was dated June.— A.S.) about the death of the liberator of America, the well-known Doctor Franklin, delivered a speech in which he accumulated everything that could remind of the Bastille's insolent destruction, and proposed the National Assembly to go into mourning for the philosopher. All our new Franklins agreed submissively to Count Mirabeau's proposal and, appointing three days of mourning, instructed their chairman to inform the American congress of this date immediately, adding that Count Mirabeau's speech be printed. Franklin won fame in the world of science by his invention of the lightning-conductor, and in the political world by his gift of liberty to America; and as the former is held in high honour here, in spite of all the misfortunes that follow in its train, Count Mirabeau did not fail to add to his own praises the latin verse composed by M. Turgot in honour of Mr. Franklin: eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrum que tyrannis—tore the thunder from the skies and the sceptre from the hands of the tyrants (i. e., the sovereign power over America from the English). In this connection Count Mirabeau said that we had mourned sufficiently for famous persons and that the time has now come to mourn for the heroes of humanity. Here Count Mirabeau undoubtedly has in mind those villains of the human race who in destroying the obedience due to sovereign power have as their aim not the prosperity of mankind but their own enrichment and promotion, or the transition from philosophical speculations to filling their pockets with money; such one was Franklin; such, undoubtedly, are Count Mirabeau and all his retinue sitting in the National Assembly. They will leave their country in poverty and the heirs to their riches, acquired by treason, in affluence."

Such was Franklin's "obituary" in the *St. Petersburg Vedomosti*. In order to understand the sharp tone of this official organ of the Russian court we must bear in mind the conditions obtaining in Russia at that time, and, in particular, the fear of the empress that the "infection of the revolution" might spread from America and France to Russia.

In May 1790 appeared Radishchev's revolutionary book *A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*, printed illegally in the author's own printshop. At the end of June Catherine began to read the book. On June 30th Radishchev was arrested and proceedings against him commenced.

From Catherine's comments on Radishchev's book we know that she considered the *Journey* an echo of the ideas and events of the French revolution. Lashing the autocracy and the serf order of Russia, Radishchev praised "the civil liberty" in America, i.e., the results of the American revolution. His tribute to Franklin, along the lines of Turgot's verse, could not but turn into a tribute to revolutionary republicanism in general.

However, this episode did not bear any "prohibitive" consequences with regard to Franklin. His works continued to be published in Russia. His popularity as a scientist and a writer grew. Still it was deprived of any political colouring.

In 1791, Nikolai Karamzin, leader of the Russian school of sentimentalism, published in his magazine *Moskovski Zhurnal* (part IV, p. 55) a note on Franklin's autobiography which had appeared in Paris. "Everyone reading this noteworthy book," wrote Karamzin, "will be amazed by the wonderful pattern of human fate. Franklin who roamed the streets of Philadelphia in a torn coat without friends or money, knowing nothing but the English tongue and the poor trade of a printer, this Franklin in a few years' time became famous and esteemed in two continents, curbed the pride of the British, presented freedom to almost the whole of America, and enriched science by a great discovery!"

In the same year, *La Science du Bonhomme Richard* appeared in Moscow in a new, considerably improved translation (from the French) under the title: *How to Live in the Prosperity, Science of the Good Man Richard.* That year a separate edition also appeared in Petersburg of one of Franklin's most famous essays *Moral Derived From a Game of Chess.*

In 1795 the magazine *Priyatnoye Preprovozhdenye Vremeni* (part XX, Nos. 80 and 81) printed *An Excerpt From Franklin's Notes Written to Himself*, which contained two famous didactic chapters from the Autobiography, devoted to the tasks and methods of moral self-perfection. In the same magazine, under the heading *Poor Jacob Who Had Plenty*, there appeared yet another translation of *La Science du Bonhomme Richard*, this time from the German, by Grigori Glinka. Glinka had taken it from the German moralist writer Engel who had included it in his book *Der Philosoph fur die Welt* under the title *Der Arme Jacob der genug hat.*

In 1797, Karamzin printed in the third volume of his *Pantheon of Foreign Literature*, three of Franklin's Parisian parables: *A Petition of the Left Hand, The Whistle, The Good and Bad Leg.*

Two years later the first volume of Franklin's collected works in the Russian language appeared in Moscow, headed: *Excerpts From Franklin's Notes and a Short Description of His Life and Some of His Works.* The translation (from the French) and the introduction were by Andrei Turgenev. The volume contained six articles, including an excerpt from the Autobiography (the above-mentioned two chapters) and the *Moral Derived From a Game of Chess*, as well as *Dialogue Between Franklin and the Gout* and *To Madame Helvetius.*

This review serves to show that even in the years of reaction presented by the final period of the reign of Catherine II, Benjamin Frankin was fairly widely read in Russia.

ABEL STARTSEV

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State Literary Publishing House. Moscow. 478 pages.

Three dozen of the best American short stories, from Washington Irving to Stephen Crane, late follower of naturalism and forerunner of 20th century literature, are included in the collection.

Here are Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, Edgar Poe's *The Golden Bug* and *A Cask of Amontillado*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Grey Champion, Young Goodman Brown, Dr. Heidegger's Experiment* and *Mr. Higginbothome's Catastrophe*, Edward Hale's *The Man Without a Country*, Thorpe's *The Big Bear of Arkansaw*, Mark Twain's *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras Country, Journalist in Tennessee* and the *1, 000, 000* Dollar *Banknote*, Bret Harte's *Tennessee's Partner* and *How Santa Claus Came to Simson Bar*, George Cable's *Posson June* and *Jean Ah-Poquelin*, several of Joel Harris' stories from *Uncle Remus Stories*, Aldrich's *Marjorie Daw*, Henry James' *Daisy Miller*, Hamlin Garland's *Under the Lion's Paw* and *Return of a Private*, Frank Norris' *A Deal in Wheat*, Ambrose Bierce's *A Jug of Syrup, A Resumed Identity*, Stephen Crane's *An Episode of War, A Dark Brown Dog.*

The stories given in new translations, some of them appearing in Russian for the first time, will help the Russian reader to acquire a wider knowledge of American literature.

In his preface, A. Startsev, the compiler, stresses the place and significance of the short story in American literature, and compares it with the European short story. The stories are followed by notes on the authors and their work. The collection is richly illustrated by Lev Brodaty.

The same publishers are preparing for press a second volume of the American short story of the 20th century which will include stories by O.Henry, Jack London, and the contemporary writers.

SOVIET FABLES

Sergei Mikhalkov. *Fables. Soviet Writer* Publishing House. Moscow. 87 pages.

Not long ago the *Soviet Writer* Publishing House put out a small, neat volume of fables by Sergei Mikhalkov, twenty-three in all, with illustrations by Kukryniksy. The fables have all been printed before in newspapers and magazines, and have won favour with the Soviet reader.

The fable is one of the oldest genres in Russian literature. Ivan Krylov, the father of the Russian fable, who lived in the 19th century, had made the Russian fable known far beyond the bounds of Russia. His fables have been translated into 53 languages. Krylov, that master of keen and biting satire mercilessly exposed the vices of the society of his day. His poetic vocabulary, which he drew from the rich folk language, made his fables accessible and comprehensible to all. They became the property of people of all walks of life. Now the fable is being revived in Soviet literature.

Sergei Mikhalkov, the well-known children's poet and one of the co-authors of the Soviet National Anthem, has shown himself a gifted fable writer. His fables, which are full of biting satire hold up to ridicule bureaucrats and toadies, ignoramuses and dunces who fall for all kind of flattery. They are fables that help the Soviet people and the press to fight against red tape and routine.

Following the traditional fable style of substituting animals and birds for men, the poet builds up a gallery of characters personifying social failings.

In the fable *The Tipsy Hare*, the hare in his cups threatens to skin the lion alive, but meeting the lion, swears he drank the health of Mr. Lion, Mrs. Lion and all the little Lions. The lion, perfectly sober but charmed by the hare's flattery lets the hare go.

In *Not the Right Coon*, a modest and civil coon is entrusted with important tasks. They are more than he is able to cope with; he is afraid to make decisions. When the occasion arises it is neither "yes," nor "no" with the coon. But he soon gets very important and to penetrate into the sanctum of his office is far more difficult than to get to see the eagle, though the "Eagle's affairs are infinitely greater."

Mikhalkov has a fable *The Lion and the Fly* about a confiding lion and a cute fly who after having "breakfasted at the Lion's table off the same crust of bread," makes herself comfortable on the lion's ear. And after that it is rumoured that the "Fly with the Lion dwells, and is, too, the lion's first counsellor. . ." But the Lion is not aware that his uninvited guest, the insignificant fly is so powerful "that it is she that often decides his affairs."

In the fable *The Indispensible Ass*, a stupid and talkative ass often dines with the ox, makes long speeches and bores the guests. The ox would never invite the ass if not for the fact that the "Indispensible Ass is in charge of the fodder supplies in the cattle yard."

The fable *The Fox and the Beaver* won overnight popularity, after it was published in the newspaper *Pravda*. The fable ridicules the old beaver who left his wife for a young fox. But life with the fox becomes too hard for the beaver, and he wants to go back home to his wife. She, however, puts up the bar. When the beaver tries to return to his young fox, he gets the cold shoulder as the fox has already picked up another beaver.

In *The Mad Dog* the dog, who has done much harm, "more than was ever done before" is brought to court. But nobody seems to be in a hurry to give him what he deserves. His case is delayed for six months. In the meantime "the brigand grows lusty and strong in prison. He has friends, who come to change his collar; has relatives who think him a fine fellow and come to defend him at court.

Mikhalkov's fables embrace a wide range of topics. He knows how to pick out the ridiculous, and in apt words to strike home at shortcomings. His fables on political events are timely, pointed and always hit the mark. Written in colourful language, they combine the traditions of the classic style with contemporary expressions. His striking characteristics and witty sayings have become part and parcel of the Russian language. The customary didactic ending of the fable is absent in Mikhalkov's fables. He usually ends his fables with an ironic resumé or witty commentary on the story told.

The popularity of Mikhalkov's fables can be explained by the healthy spirit of self-criticism prevailing among the Soviet people, who know that it is up to them to rectify shortcomings. It is this optimism that lends Mikhalkov's fables that jocularity and cheerfulness.

THE SOVIET YOUTH

A Soldier's Life. Young Guard Publishing House. Moscow. 256 pages.

This is a book without a particular author. Life itself is the author, and the Soviet youth, boys and girls, who rose in defense of their country in the critical years of war, are the characters.

The book has been compiled from notebooks, diaries and letters written at the front by young people, many of whom did not live to see the day of victory.

Some of these gallant fighters are known to the country at large. There is Natalia Kovshova, the Moscow student, posthumously accorded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union; there are the brothers, Dmitri and Ivan Ostapenko, both tankmen. One of the brothers who was thought to have been killed and was also posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, later turned up. He had broken out of a German grave, recovered, and got back to his country.

There are the notes of an unknown soldier, killed in action, with pages soaked in his own blood; the notebook of a young Kazakh who fell in East Prussia; the story of the voluminous correspondence between Anna Ukolova, a Komsomol girl and thousands of young army men who saw her photograph in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and learned that she was a sniper who had shot 497 fascists. There are the letters and documents telling the story of Assistant Surgeon Maria Gosevaya (now Guards Captain) who saved 1 wounded on the battlefield.

All these letters and documents, as well as the diaries of the nurse Lisa Khudyakova, Boris Gubanov, the Leningrad student, and many other items in the book, give a vivid, moving and truthful picture of the new Soviet generation. They show the whole complex of their thoughts and emotions, their vast interests and broad outlook.

Boris Gubanov, the Leningrad Komsomol who died in the fights for breaching the Leningrad blockade, wrote an hour before the battle: "Rivers are drawn to the sea; iron is drawn to magnets; flowers are drawn to the sun; birds are drawn to the South; and men are drawn to happiness. . . Only now have we come to comprehend that all that was before the war was simple human happiness. . . "

Gubanov weighs on the scales of his conscience his but too short life, recalls his habits and shortcomings, and continues: "Now we've learned the meaning of life: profound yet simple. Life is the ability to give yourself to the common cause, to be a part of the whole and not be a mere bystander. We know what we are fighting for—for the right to breathe. We know what we stand for—for Russia, for our Homeland."

On the eve of his death a line by Shota Rust'veli, the Georgian poet comes to his mind. He puts it down in his notebook: "You must live for the sake of life, and for the living lay down life."

Baubek Bulkishiev, a Kazakh youth, also writes of Life and Death. "There was a time," he writes in his diary, "when man was proud of life, repeating Goethe's words: 'The greatest gift man got from God and from Nature is life!' Man will never relinquish this pride. Man must live like befits man. Let the human world be a real world for him. It is for this that we are fighting, and for this we are ready to give our lives. It is for the sake of life that we scorn death.'"

Like thousands of other boys and girls, Bulkishiev understood the true value of happiness, the value of what the Soviet social and state order could give him before the war, when all roads to life were open to him. He writes of his youthful dreams and again his thoughts dwell on the destiny of his generation, the children of a militant era:

"Man is born, man dies: no grief in that. This is the law of nature. We in the East say: 'Man is always a guest at life's table. He stays a while and goes his way.' But man does not just come and go. He leaves his successor a spiritual inheritance. He comes into life a human being and departs a human being. We are proud that we have been granted life, youth, love; that we have been granted a human heart. We love life."

Love of life and profound human feelings, fill the letters of Natalia Kovshova, a student of the Moscow Aviation Institute, a sniper at the front, who without a moment's hesitation blew herself up with a grenade when the enemy surrounded her.

Such they are these ordinary young Soviet folk, who during the hours of darkness at the front, while pondering over the meaning of life and death, recalled Homer and Goethe, Rust'veli and Tolstoy, testing the truth of their ideas by the yardstick of their own ideals and principles, by the consciousness of a generation brought up by the new social order.

POEMS ABOUT LENINGRAD

Olga Bergholz. *Your Way. Young Guard* Publishing House. Leningrad. 124 pages.

This latest book by Olga Bergholz, the Leningrad poetess, contains her best wartime poems. Among them are the lyrical series *(Leningrad, February Diary, Leningrad Poem)* published in 1941-1944, and the poems written in the Victory year.

In Soviet poetry Olga Bergholz's name is

linked with the theme of the besieged Leningrad. She took part in its defense and spent the hardest months in the beleaguered city. It was in this trying time that she rose to her greatest poetical heights. Her verses breathing faith in ultimate victory over famine, death and the enemy, were published in Leningrad's newspapers and broadcast over the air.

Her poems and ballads might well be called the lyrical annals of the blockade, the record of suffering and grit, struggle and victory. Olga Bergholz has told the story in verse charged with the grim simplicity and suffering of the eye-witness—"From the depths of the soul I wring my Muse, unsparing of the living tissue."

With the poet we again live through the "racket of the first bombings" and "the scream of the sirens"; we see "the eerie light of the gunfire in empty houses."

Leningrad "bound in ice and drenched in blood" rises before us tangible and real. Olga Bergholz has drawn pictures full of unforgettable tragedy. It is hard to read without emotion of "the transparent grave of ice," where "a Leningrader, whom fate has made my brother, like a mammoth, fallen a hundred centuries ago, lay cased in the city's ice," of "the boards with jutting nails that looked like crucifixion crosses" with which the Leningraders stoked their home-made stoves, of "the tiny frozen rations of bread."

There were instances when starving Leningraders exchanged their meagre bread rations for a copy of Olga Bergholz's tiny book of poems. The verses helped them to grapple with inhuman hardship, and to keep going. The leitmotif of all her poems was the supreme test of a nation's strength of spirit.

In simple, unadorned phrases Bergholz tells of those qualities of lofty humaneness, the qualities of the man of socialist society that she observed in the people of the beleaguered city, in the workers, in women and soldiers with whom she shared the sufferings of the blockade and the glory of victory.

Soldiers en route to the front shared their rations with children (*The Army*). An army lorry-driver bringing bread across the frozen Lake Ladoga—the only "road of life"—thawed out his frozen fingers by dipping them in petrol and setting fire to them. Mending the engine he takes up the wheel again in blistered hands that stick to his mittens. But the driver knows: "Sixteen thousand mothers will get their 125 grams of blockade bread half in half with blood and fire" (*Leningrad Poem*). "Yes, we admit it in those days we ate earth and glue and leather . . . but, swallowing his broth of stewed leather strap, the stubborn worker went back to his machine." "I am proud," writes Olga Bergholz, "that in those days we knew such a great inspiration of labour as never before."

Olga Bergholz regards the Leningrad epic as a vast, majestic theme whose sense and meaning is apparent to all the freedom-loving nations. "We are forging new laws of human happiness and human love," says the poet and that gives her the right to believe that not only contemporaries but future generations too will honour the memory of the great deeds of the people of Leningrad. "And the world will again be able to warm it spirit at our blockade bonfire" (*Leningra Autumn*).

One of Olga Bergholz's latest poems i *Your Way*. It is a moving story of love bor in the most terrible days of the blockade a story of great happiness won through sui fering, struggle and courage. It is one of th best poems in the collection.

Olga Bergholz is a lyrical poet. Her verse are permeated with deep sincerity, wit profound emotions, and with keen psycho logical understanding of human experiences

BOOKS FOR MILLIONS

Constantine Paustovsky. *Stories. Ogone* Mass Library Publishing House. Moscow 63 pages.

These small booklets with the author's por trait on the standard white cover, publishe before the war by *Ogonek* Mass Library enjoyed great popularity in the U.S.S.R The series contained poems and stories, mos of them previously published in magazines It included the works of famous as well a of young, promising writers. During the wa when a number of big publishing house temporarily shut down, this interesting serie was also stopped.

Now the publication of the little volume have been resumed. As before, the books ar being printed in editions of 100,000. Toda about a dozen of them have already com off the press. Among them are collection of poems by Alexander Tvardovsky, Mikhai Isakovsky, Alexei Surkov, Stepan Shchi pachev, a volume of stories by Lev Kassil Vadim Kozhevnikov and Constantine Paus tovsky.

The booklets include front lyrics, soldie marching songs, war stories, stories c every-day life in war and in peace, children and other stories.

One of the most interesting of this serie is the book of stories by Constantine Pau stovsky. Some of Paustovsky's best book like *Karabugas, The Fate of Charles Launce ville, Romantics, Colhida* and *The Black Se* were in their time highly praised by Maxir Gorky and Romain Rolland. Paustovsky' plays, *Simple Souls, The Constellation c Hunting Dogs* and others have been stage in numerous theatres all over the country Paustovsky is justly regarded as one of th most original writers of the psychologica novel. His world outlook is that of a roman ticist. For the last number of years, he ha been writing in the tradition of romanti fiction, retaining his own originality. Hi favourite characters—workers, artists an scientists—are men inspired by the loft dreams of human happiness. His worker and seamen possess enquiring minds and fin human hearts. In all his works Paustovsk has shown with great artistic force the thought and feelings of his characters who give them selves up wholeheartedly to the lofty ideal and strivings of the people.

Paustovsky is a master of landscape, a fin and sensitive connoisseur of Russian scenery But description of scenery is never the dom inating feature of his works. His character

re men and women who draw strength and vealth of thought and feeling from nature, vho discover its secrets, battle with its ele- ients and transform it for the good of ian.

Rainy Dawn, the story taken as the title or the collection, tells how on a rainy au- umn night, a Red Army officer Kuzmin, n his way from hospital finds himself on he pier of a small Volga town, where his omrade in battle had lived before the war. Kuzmin has a letter from him to his sweet- eart. He finds the girl and hands her the etter. He tells the girl about himself. "When was in hospital," he tells her, "everybody ot letters but I. There was no one to write o me. There I lay thinking about what I was oing to do after the war. It would have to e something big and out of the ordinary, decided."

The little town that "smelt of dill, wet nces and waterside dampness" somehow ade the lonely officer wish to confide his most thoughts to this unknown, but friendly, ntelligent and understanding woman. In e morning Kuzmin boarded a boat, taking ith him the pleasant recollection of the brief eeting and the marvellous feeling of joy returning to the world that is full of big nd little surprises, that has sad and jolly eetings and love in store.

The story of the little shepherd boy (*The ittle Shepherd Boy*) is deeply moving. While is dad is away at the front the boy helps his nother to feed the family, dreaming at the ime time of travels and adventures.

"An ordinary shepherd boy—a tiny chap ith fair hair, wearing a large cap and a torn ottonwool jacket, and carrying a great big hip"—sat writing a letter to his father at he front. But he sends his letter in a bottle like the explorers and travellers of his fa- ourite books", because "there is no fun in ending it by post." "Our river flows into he Volga and the bottle will surely get there," he boy decides.

Paustovsky's children stories are superb. Two of the best stories in the book are *The Adventures of the Horned Beetle* and *Hot Bread*. In them the author reveals a rare and keen understanding of the child's mind. These are stories full of warmth, poetry and delicate humour.

Most typical of Paustovsky's writing is the tory *The Glazier*. In a Russian village the uthor met a man, a former peasant who ad become a renowned glazier. "This quiet nan who looked like a boy, who had a drawn ace and serious grey eyes" cherished the vonderful dream of making a piano out of rystal.

"Every craftsman," said Vassya, smiling hyly, "wants to make something fine that obody has ever done before. Indeed, he s a master craftsman! . . Now my idea is o make a piano out of crystal.

"I'll make the crystal look like mist shot vith gold; the second keys will be of black rystal. The whole piano will be like snow. t will gleam and ring. I haven't words nough to tell you what a glorious flow of ound it will give."

TALES OF MEN IN WAR

Andrei Platonov—*Where the Sun Sets. Soviet Writer* Publishing House. Moscow. 99 pages.

Andrei Platonov gained fame as a writer of the psychological story long before the war. The *River Potudan* and *Immortality* are among his best known books.

Platonov brought to literature the men and women he admired, common folk who lived a grim and hard life. The author succeeded in giving a splendid picture of their spiritual world.

A writer, extremely sensitive to every human suffering, Platonov was drawn to the tragic, to complex psychological conflicts. He was attracted by the themes of death and immortality, old age and loneliness. At the same time, in his short stories, he tried to solve the problems of the formation of the new type of man and the new socialist morality. Sometimes his stories were contradictory but never lacking in sincerity or effort to reveal the beauty and strength of human strivings.

The theme of *Immortality* is present in many of Platonov's pre-war works. It again appears in his war stories, where the hero—the soldier, with his sweat and blood, at the price of incredible hardships and selfless courage is fighting for victory. His new heroes are sailors, foot-sloggers, gunners and sappers.

The hero of the title story is Ivan Semyonovich Tolokno, a sapper, who was a foreman at a factory building project in the Urals before the war. Tolokno always set about a job with joy of visualizing it completed. It was the same at the front. To get the tanks across a river he and his fellow sappers worked all night up to the neck in icy spring water. He thought out how to shift huge boulders out of the way without any mechanical help. Under fire, he cut a broad sloping shelf in the bank down to the river and at dawn, clambered on the armour of a tank and rode into battle.

The story makes one sense almost physically the arduous labour of the sappers, the men who do war's hardest chores. The author shows the war as his characters see it. He marches with them "towards the setting sun" over scorched, blood-drenched land.

Platonov's stories do not only show the gallant deeds of the Russian soldier; they reveal the intangible but moving inner forces that govern the Soviet soldier in battle.

In the story *Friendly Cow*, a Red Army man, an old-timer, spends the eve of the battle in a peasant hut, with a peasant woman, a Red Army man's widow, and her four children. The woman tells him of her troubles, how she is struggling to keep her family going with only her cow to help her. Later, in action, while forcing the Dnieper, the picture of the simple, brave woman keeps constantly appearing before him. He is wounded. On his way home from hospital he happens again to come to that very village and he sees the results of his brave fighting: the village torn from the enemy is living in freedom and in peace.

There is something in Platonov's wartime stories that makes them akin to folk epics. In drawing his characters he endows them with traits typical of the people in general, the finest traits of old Russian knighthood; with the desire to accomplish gallant feats for the good of all, with the awareness of what they are fighting for.

Several stories in the collection deal with men returning home from the war. In *Sampo*, Kirei Nigar, a smith, discharged from hospital, goes straight back to his native village in Karelia. But all he finds is the water wheel of the mill. It was wet and would not burn. . . "Kirei walked slowly round the scorched remains of the village and sat down near the solitary turning, splashing wheel." He recalled how everything had looked before the war and despair gripped him. But after thinking it over, Kirei decided to build up life anew on ruins and ashes. He believed "that those who survived would return to the old spot, new people would be born and the village would be built anew, better than before."

The stories in Andrei Platonov's latest collection are not of equal artistic merit. The best are those where he has succeeded in revealing "The Soul of the Soldier" and disclosing the "secret of bravery" displayed by common Soviet folk. These stories radiate the truth about the war for which the Soviet reader looks in the works of Soviet writers.

MIKHAIL ISAKOVSKY'S POEMS

Mikhail Isakovsky. *Songs of the Homeland. Soviet Writer* Publishing House. Moscow. 110 pages.

"I lost my peasant status but I have forever remained a son of the soil," wrote M. Isakovsky in 1936 when he left the village for the city, to take up writing. The Russian countryside, the Soviet peasantry, collective farm life, nature and labour have forever remained his principal themes.

The poems in *Songs of the Homeland* relate to different periods in Isakovsky's writings.

The tunefulness, variety of rhythm, and wealth of vocabulary sprinkled now and then with local dialect and the sincerity and optimism with which his verses are permeated lend Isakovsky's poems colour and make them extremely popular. Isakovsky never fails to find those simple and warm words that make an ordinary topic seem fresh and new. Whether he speaks of the grave of an unknown Red Army man (*Here Lies a Red Army Man*) or of a girl who sees her sweet heart off to the front (*The Flame*) or of me listening to a waltz played on an accordio during a lull in the battle (*In a Copse o the Front*), he always brings a breath of lif and emotion.

No wonder that most of Isakovsky's poem put to music have become popular songs which earned him a Stalin Prize.

Outstanding in the present collection i *The Story of Stepan and Death.* In witty folk lore style the poet tells of an old peasan who, when death comes for him, persuade it to give him a reprieve—first until the sum mer when the wheat will ripen, then unti his grandchild is born so that he can be sur "that his clan lives on and flourishes" an finally till he knows that "Hitler has kicke the bucket."

Isakovsky's poetry is folk poetry in th best sense of the word. The apparent simpli city of his verse is the outcome of a hig skill and painstaking choice of words.

THE ART OF DRAMATIC READING

Among the play-bills announcing new theatrical productions, symphony concerts and cinema premières in Moscow we now often see placards of another kind. In them we read of premières in a One-Man-Theatre; of recitals to be given by one or another master of the art of recitation. *Three Musketeers* is on at the Theatre for Juveniles, and *Three Musketeers* is to be read by Alexander Gluzdov; Gogol's *Dead Souls* is being produced at the Moscow Art Theatre and simultaneously a reading of *Dead Souls* is being given in a literary programme by Anton Schwartz, winner of the Competition of Readers of the U.S.S.R. Gogol himself once wrote:

"I am glad to hear that we have at last started public readings of our writers at home. . . Only good reading can give people a proper understanding of the poets. I even think that in time public readings will supplant theatrical performances." (Letters from Italy, 1843.)

The readings of which Gogol spoke were initiated by the great Russian actor, Mikhail Shchepkin who was himself a virtuoso of the art of recitation. "He seemed to be acting," contemporaries would say remembering his readings, "speaking all the parts himself."

The history of Russian art knows many excellent readers both from among its actors and its writers. Krylov, the writer of fables, Pushkin, Gogol and Dostoyevsky could all give splendid readings of their own works. The great tragic actress Maria Ermolova, stirred large audiences with her recitations of the poems of Lermontov and Nekrasov, monologues from the plays of Shakespeare and Schiller.

"To speak simply and well is a science, which must have laws of its own," wrote Constantine Stanislavsky. And the Art Theatre actors—Vasili Kachalov, Olga Knipper-Chekhova, Ivan Moskvin and Leonid Leonidov are indeed outstanding masters of this art. In the last century the Russian concert platform boasted a number of outstanding readers. Enthusiastic accounts have come down to us of the way Andreyev-Burlak, the Russian tragedian, read Gogol's *Notes of a Madman*. Ivan Gorbunov, actor and writer, trained a school of readers of narrative who have life-like sketches and pictures in words. He was inimitable. "The animated play of his features, his sparing gestures, the delicate shadings of a voice not rich in itself, his whispers, his spluttering, excited, rapid utterance, the expressive pauses—all contributed to marvelous delineations in vividly typical traits," so wrote Academician Koni in speaking of Gorbunov.

And yet, before the October Revolution programmes devoted exclusively to recitations were rare events. At the present time they are of almost daily occurrence. Figuring in our Soviet repertoires are works of Russian and world literature of all times and countries from *The Lay of Igor's March*, the ancient Russian epic, to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and pages from Marcel Proust.

To Alexander Zakushnyak (1879-1930) who implanted on our stage the art of relating works of literature, belongs the honour of having been the dean of our masters of elocution.

Among Zakushnyak's masterpieces which delighted audiences with the artistry of his execution, were Gogol's *Taras Bulba*; *The Revolt of the Angels* by Anatole France; *Resurrection* by Leo Tolstoy and short stories by Maupassant, Chekhov, Mark Twain and Sholom Aleikhem.

"My work on a piece of literature," he used to say, "is the work of author, producer and performer, all in one."

In the last years of his life Zakushnyak gave as many as a hundred recitals in the course of a year. But even that was not sufficient! "What we want," he used to say, "is lots more Zakushnyaks," and his wish has now come true. In 1945, in Moscow alone, over five thousand literary evenings were held, over two hundred readers of different schools, trends and individualities giving readings and recitations—all developing the branch of art so enthusiastically initiated by Zakushnyak.

During the years when the Soviet republic was yet in its infancy, struggling for its existence in the throes of the Civil War, special *Institutes of the Living Word*, as they were aptly called, were opened in Moscow and Leningrad. Speaking at the opening of one of these institutes at Leningrad in 1918, Academician Lunacharsky, who was the first Commissar for Education, said: "I am convinced that a whole world of delight, of psychological depths and hidden beauty will be revealed by the culture of a literature read aloud, when, like the troubadours of old our poets will sing their verses; when tales and novels, as they appear, will be read aloud at popular festivities in the presence of assembled crowds."

In 1937 the First Competition of Masters of Recitation of the U.S.S.R. was held, with some five hundred readers participating. Here is what People's Artist Kachalov, who was President of the jury, wrote on the occasion: "The art of recitation from the intimate or chamber style," he said, "has become a mass—a people's art. The repertoire selected has absorbed all the wealth of world literature."

Master of Dramatic Recitation Dmitri Zhuravlev

The acknowledged laureate of that competition was Anton Schwartz, one of the most popular of our readers, a man who can convey the beauty of nature, her colours, atmosphere and sound with consummate plastic relief; who is equally successful in the tenderest lyrical outpourings, in the metallic rhythm of rhetoric, in subtle irony and vivid word-painting. In the twelve programmes Schwartz has drawn up for his performances he passes with the ease of a master from Gogol's *Dead Souls* to Andersen's fairy tales; from the music of Turgenev's prose to the intricate word weaving of Leskov's *The Enchanted Pilgrim*; from the verses of Pushkin and Blok to a story by Maupassant.

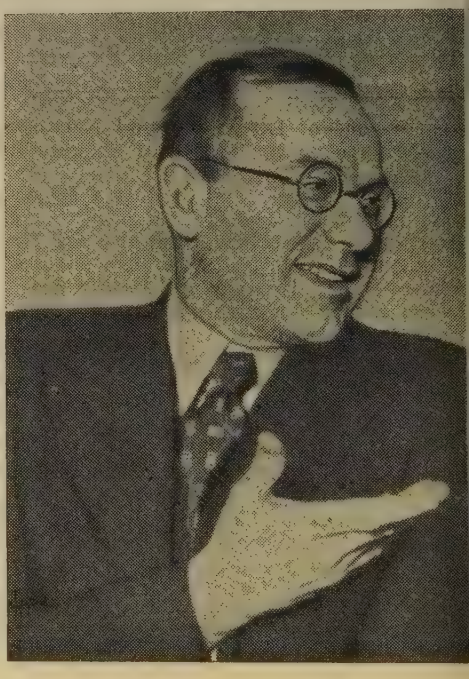
Another prize winner in that competition, Vladimir Yakhontov, brought his own contribution, new and original, into the art of reading. In his compositions entitled respectively *Lenin*, *A Man Must Have His Dreams* and *A Toast to Life*, he boldly combined publicism with poetry and memoir material with excerpts from literature, skilfully introducing music by Beethoven, Chaikovsky and Scriabin. The whole composition is dominated by one idea, creating a performance that is complete, new and original. He did not stop in some of his compositions at introducing purely theatrical devices, or completing his one-man show with details of domestic surroundings, by using a walking stick, silk hat, cloak or eye-glass, passing from simple reading to peculiar stage effects obtained through mimicry and gesture. It was by these means that he achieved his dramatic reading of *Nastasya Philipovna*, a composition after Dostoyevsky's novel *The Idiot*.

The third prize winner, Dmitri Zhuravlev, in his interpretations avoids anything "theatrical". "My palette," he says, "is speech—only speech." He is inimitable as a reader of Chekhov's stories, bringing to mind the words of Stanislavsky: "Chekhov cannot be acted; you must *be* in his plays—exist, live in them sensing the inmost chords of the Chekhov's soul."

And then you hear Zhuravlev in another programme. This time it is *Carmen* after Prosper Mérimée, and we hear something entirely new—the French manner of speaking—light, sprightly, the daintily precise speech form of the famous French writer and traveller. The ironical discourse "from the author" comes to an end, and Carmen appears. And such is the reader's art, the magic of his accents, his perfection of word-portraiture that there rises before the spectator "in the gloomy light of the stars the image of Carmen in all its terrible wild beauty." (Mérimée.)

Yet another style of recitation is furnished by the art of People's Artist of the Republic Igor Ilyinsky, one of Russia's finest comedy actors. Rendered by Ilyinsky, a fragment by Robert Burns grows into a vivid little comedy. Without the aid of make-up or costume Ilyinsky creates a flesh-and-blood image of a personage: the old tutor Karl Ivanovich from Tolstoy's *Childhood*, recounting the sorrowful story of his life, or a naughty boy from one of Samuil Marshak's verses for children.

Nikolai Efross and Pyotr Yaroslavtsev, both distinguished masters of their art, be-



Master of Dramatic Recitation Igor Ilyinsk

Master of Dramatic Recitation
Alexander Glumov

long to the same school as Ilyinsky, always appearing together, their speech-duet provides an original medium for reciting the verses of Mayakovsky and other modern Soviet poets and the fables of Krylov and Mikhalkov.

Emmanuil Kaminka has a manner all his own of telling humorous stories by Maupassant, Mark Twain and Sholom Aleikhem with perfect composure and imperturbable calm.

This brief sketch, incomplete as it is, will give some idea of the varied styles and devices employed by Soviet elocutionists. Not unfrequently music is introduced as an aid to recitation but in a far different way from what in former times was known in this country as "melo-declamation". Alexander Glumov has a very interesting recitation with music of *Peer Gynt* and he does Duma's *Three Musketeers* to an original instrumental accompaniment of piano, horn, violoncello and drums. The music by Sergei Vasilenko breaking into the narrative now gives contrasting effects, now stresses an image, thought, or intonation. Music becomes an equal member, as it were, of a performance by a troupe consisting of one actor. With the same musical ensemble to back him Glumov recites and acts Shakespeare's *Hamlet* creating an image of the Danish prince that is very near to the Soviet audience's conception of him not as the victim of mental dualism and absence of will, but as a citizen of future generations inspired by dreams of new and just relations between men.

The popularity enjoyed by this genre of dramatic reading and the experience they have accumulated now enable our readers to include in their repertoires works so complex that no one would ever have dreamt in the past of attempting them in a one-man narration.

As we know from Tolstoy's reminiscences, the *Kreutzer Sonata*, one of his most profound works, was conceived as a narrative for public reading. One day when Tolstoy had been listening at home with Ilya Repin, the famous Russian painter, as a guest, to Andreyev-Burlak's recitations, he made a suggestion to these two friends of his. He, Tolstoy, would write a tale which Andreyev-Burlak would read from the platform and Repin was to paint a special picture illustrating the subject. Tolstoy's idea was put into life by the Soviet reader Suren Kocharyan who gives a wonderfully vivid rendering of Pozdnyshev, the hero of the *Sonata's* passionate monologue-confession of the tragedy that wrecked his family life. Suren Kocharyan scores big successes by his readings of the ancient Armenian epic *David of Sassun*, of the Georgian *Knight in the Tiger's Skin* by Shota Rust'veli, the fairy tales of Shekherezade and Boccaccio's stories. Before appearing on the platform with the composition, Kocharyan does a good deal of painstaking and careful work in setting down its literary text, selecting what is most expressive and characteristic, seeking for passages that reflect the life-truth of the period. In Kocharyan's rendition of the epic he approaches the style of the ancient tellers of tales enriched by the craftsmanship of the modern actor.

Our readers have made no small contribution to the propaganda of the multi-national wealth of folklore and literature. The verses of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko; of Abai, the Kazakh classic; Alisher Nava'i, the poet of Uzbekistan, *Manass* and *Djangar*, the Kirghiz epics, have all been brought within the reach of the public by our masters of reading and recitation. *The*

Master of Dramatic Recitation
Suren Kocharyan

Master of Dramatic Recitation
Sergei Balashov

Lay of Igor's March, the Russian heroic epic composed by an unknown bard of the 12th century, in a new translation by Alexei Yugov has been revived by the talented reader Sergei Balashov.

During the war Balashov gave something like a thousand concerts at the front. When visiting the Northern fleet in July 1942, he gave readings in a submarine commanded by Hero of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Lunin. Balashov recited Mayakovsky's verses: "Speak to the fascists in the tongue of conflagrations, the words of bullets, the jests of bayonets. . ." To show their gratitude to the man who had given them such pleasure, the men proposed to send the next torpedo into action in the name of those who had taken part in the entertainment. Taking up a piece of chalk, Balashov made an inscription on the torpedo—writing the words of Mayakovsky that had just been spoken there:

"Song and verse are bomb and banner."

A few days later the commander of the submarine wirelessed to Balashov from the Barents Sea:

"Autograph promptly delivered to addressee, capacity six thousand tons. Nikolai Lunin."

In an interval between two journeys to the front Balashov visited the Urals. He had a special programme for the munitions factories called *Frontline Diaries*. In that composition, orator and propagandist were merged in the actor and artist. The diaries contained authentic episodes which Balashov had witnessed at the front on the land liberated by the Red Army. These narrative were interspersed with verses and stori by other Soviet writers who were doin their bit in the war in the same way as Ba lashov was doing his. With the proceeds his Urals concerts Balashov bought a T-3 tank and presented it to the Red Army Thus the slogan: "The word is arms" a quired a tangible meaning in the days war.

In the course of the war, Soviet reade gave something over one hundred thousan performances in munitions works and ho pitals. They did not all live to see Victor Day, however. Georgi Artobolevsky, th Leningrad reciter, whom his listeners wi always remember as one of the most enthu siastic and widely-educated propagandists world literature, perished at the front. H friends used to call him jokingly "the Livin Library". He could give his literary conce programmes every evening for a whole mont without once repeating a single item. Ther were special evenings devoted to the class ics of antiquity, to the Renaissance, th Russian novel, the French and Italian story Persian lyrical poetry, the Georgian an ancient Russian epics, to Cervantes an Blok, Boccaccio and Mayakovsky. He wa not only an admirable reader but an outstand ing theoretician and historian of the art recitation—which he loved to call the "th atre of the imagination."

During the grim days of the siege Leningrad, the voices of Soviet reade sounded over the radio, in hospital ward on the decks of ships that were frozen in th Neva, in unheated shops of factories an works, encouraging famished and exhauste men with words of ardent enthusiasm.

The patriotic theme was particularly pro nounced. Patriotism was the subject of coun less original compositions. Among them or of the works of Suren Kocharyan occupie a place all its own. The title was *For Hom Land*. It was first performed by the artist i the foothills of the Caucasus before an aud ence of Red Army men. The composition wa built on texts from Shakespeare. Leavin aside proper names and geographical loca ities, Kocharyan composed a poem in th form of a monologue from different lines i Shakespeare's plays, the whole dominated b the theme of love for Country. It is an arde appeal by a tribune to a people waging sacred war for liberation against those wh bear on their banner the device: "The fi is our conscience, and our law—the sword. The leitmotif of the monologue is: "Gloriou is the sword when it is unsheathed for ju tice."

Now that the war is over, our Soviet ma ters of reading are seeking new forms developing their art. A permanent Reader Theatre is to be opened in Moscow in th course of the current year. Performances wi be given daily, featuring new works by ou readers both of the old and the new gener tion. The theatre will be a centre for furth searchings and experiments in the domai of sounded literature.

SIMON DREIDE

SVYATOSLAV RICHTER

When in the autumn of 1945, a nation-vide competition of musicians was announc-d in Moscow and the chances of the differ-nt candidates were discussed in musical ircles, the name that came most readily o people's lips was that of Svyatoslav Rich-er. Richter had friends and staunch admir-rs in the capital ever since a certain Novem-ber evening in 1940, when at his début on he concert platform he captivated the audi-nce with a wonderful performance of Pro-kofyev's Sixth Sonata.

Even before that people had spoken of him as an exceptionally gifted pupil of Pro-fessor Neygaus' pianoforte class at the Moscow Conservatory, and one who was also greatly nterested in everything new in the musical world. He had, it was said, gathered around him a group of young people who met once a week in one of the Conservatory classrooms. Here one might hear four-handed renditions of the works of Bruckner and Mahler, Rich-ard Strauss and Ravel, Stravinsky and Hindemith, Prokofyev and Shostakovich.

Having been present at these performances more than once, I was able to convince my-self that Richter was the life and soul of this youthful group. Another thing that be-came evident was that with all his outstanding pianistic qualities, the word "pianist" was too narrow a definition for Richter. Here was a musician in the broadest sense of the word, a man for whom music was not merely a subject of study and not a career, but life itself, the goal of existence.

The press notices following on his Novem-ber 1940 début predicted a great future for the young pianist. His concerts increased and became a regular feature during the musical season. He worked hard. He remain-ed in Moscow even in the grimmest days of the war and it was then that he acquired his lasting popularity and his public—a circle of people who never miss a single one of his concerts. As was to be expected, Richter car-ried off the first prize at the 1945 competi-tion.

He became a professional pianist at a later age than is usual. Born at Zhitomir in the Ukraine, he received his first musical edu-cation from his father who had studied mu-sic—piano and organ—in Vienna and later held a professorship at the Odessa Conser-vatory. The boy's musical talent first show-ed itself in composition; he wrote music when he was seven. He says he gave up com-position at the age of twenty-two, but Ney-gaus, his master, speaks of his remarkable creative faculties and says that it is Richter's modesty that prevents him from performing his own works in public. And the fact that creative art was the starting point in Rich-ter's musical biography is no less significant than his present passionate desire to become a conductor.

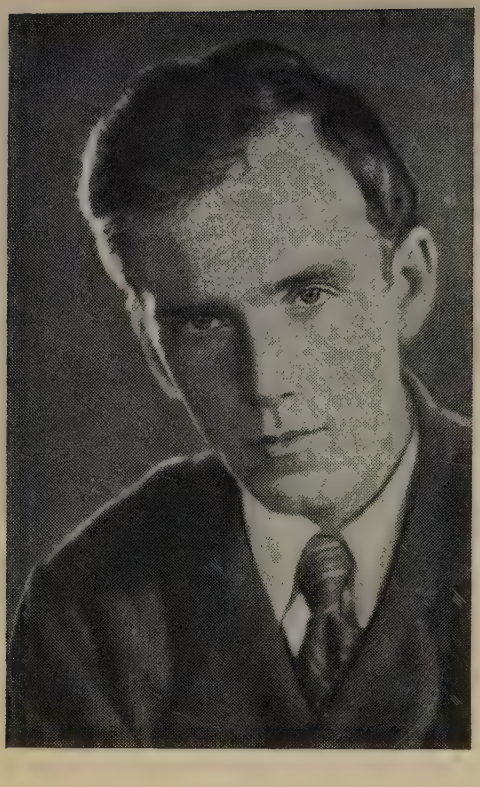
At the age of fourteen we find him accom-panying singers; at eighteen he was playing in the orchestra at the Odessa Opera House. He went through the parts with the solo perform-ers. That was a splendid training in ensemble playing—Richter is perhaps one of the best ensemble performers of all Soviet musicians. At one time he was captivated by improvi-sation, and is very fond of it still—dreaming, he once said, of reviving the art on the con-cert platform.

Accompanist — ensemble player — impro-viser—it was a life of half dilettante, half craftsman. Everything changed when Richter came to Moscow. At an age when people possessed of a talent of his calibre are win-ning laurels on the world stage, he was only just entering on a course of systematic musi-cal study. The story goes that when Neygaus heard Richter play for the first time—a tall gaunt youth with a shock of red hair on a head that seemed too large for his body, he gave a delighted exclamation: "That's the pupil I've been dreaming about all my life!"

Neygaus divined in Richter something more than the elemental force of pianistic talent. That alone was not enough to impress so powerfully one who had, in the course of a long life devoted to music, seen many fine virtuosos all over the world and in his own class. Added to which it was just at that time that Neygaus had Emil Ghillels, one of the most brilliant of Soviet pianists, studying under him. In Richter, Neygaus sensed the artist par excellence—an artist of exception-ally vivid and original individuality.

Now some people who give concerts play for success which they are ready to achieve at any cost, even if it means sacrificing their service to art; others labour faithfully, to the full extent of their powers. To still others, their music is a sacred fire at which they worship as did the priests of old. Richter plays because he has a passionate love for music and is convinced of the mighty effect it has on those who listen to it. He is not afraid, for example, to unite in one program-me, eight preludes and fugues from Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*; Haydn's Sonata in B Flat Major and Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasia*. What a tremendous poetical in-spiration is required of a performer to prevent this programme, lacking in any outer effec-tiveness, as it does, but extremely difficult of execution, from becoming converted into a boring academic recital that would send the audience off into a sound sleep? What is required is artistic daring and unshakeable faith in musical art and confidence in one's own powers. And it was just this programme that proved the most successful in Richter's concerts of last season; it was received with unbounded enthusiasm.

Richter studied under Neygaus from 1937 to 1941 when the war separated master and pupil for a long period. What is it, we ask ourselves, that was imparted to Richter during these four years of study? Technique? Nature had seen to that. The finish of the virtuoso?—a polished brilliance, dazzling the audience with a trained outward artistry? These things interest Richter but little. His attention penetrates into deeper spheres. Musical conception? That not even the best



of masters can inspire. But once a young artist possesses it, it can be directed along the required channels. And that is what Neygaus has done for Richter.

The technical part of the studies proceeded in the usual way. That is self-evident. It never played a leading role, however. Richter learned with extraordinary ease. From his earliest Conservatory years he would astonish with the rapidity with which he mastered new pieces. He did not really have to learn things. On one occasion he read at sight Shostakovich's Second Pianoforte Sonata—it has just appeared—a most complicated work. He read it from an illegibly-written manuscript, not only playing it then and there in the requisite tempo but conveying the very soul of the music.

That is one of the reasons why his repertoire is so extensive. He once happened to mention casually that he has fifteen concert programmes always in readiness—and perhaps, he added, "even twenty." He performs prodigies in the way of repertoire. During the past season, he contrived in six recitals, besides numerous other pieces, of course, and a number of other concerts, to play the two entire volumes of the *Wohltemperiertes Klavier!* Which, incidentally, was not the result of his years of study at the Conservatory. It was all done in the autumn months of 1945, when preparing for the national musicians' competition.

The current year has opened up before Richter a new domain of repertoire, crystallizing for the time being, at any rate, his creative individuality. It is in classical art and in the early romanticism, still replete with classical reminiscence, that he has con into his own. In this soil his dominant cha acteristics have come to fluorescence. Ver interesting in this aspect is his renditio of Bach. Each prelude, each fugue is treate as a monolith—with severe unity of soun colour and movement; of ascetic simplicity the attention entirely directed to the freel flowing intertwining voices; there is a min mum of pedal; no outward contrasts; the e pressive intonation completely subordinate to the logical development of the whole r sulting in an unusual fullness and puri of the image. Richter finds a system of d vices all his own for each of the preludes ar fugues entering into the *Wohltemperiert Klavier*. He divests the music of Bach of th romantic agitation so usual in pianistic pra tice, restoring to it the artist's passiona unity with life that is the essence of Bach polyphonic music.

It is this work on Bach's polyphony th has become for Richter the cornerstone his searchings after a personal style of inte pretation. With a singleness equally simple though naturally, on a totally differe plane, Richter reveals the soul of the kind Haydn and of the wise Mozart. His Schube resembles a poetically transparent melo sung by the brookside. One can hardly ima ine any playing more entrancing than Ric ter's performance of Schubert's *Mome Musical*.

Simplicity and humanity—that is o side of Richter's pianism. The other, I wou define as the titanic element. After Richter performance of Rachmaninov's Second Co certo—the parallel Richter-Rachmanin seemed somehow a fitting one. Neither c one forget the transcendent might with whi Richter plays the finale of Beethoven *Apassionata*, or the elemental force Schumann's *Symphonic Studies*, or th wizardly technic performance of Liszt's *Fe Follets*.

Inverting the well-known proverb o might well say that the hands are the mirr of the pianist's soul. Richter's hands conve a faithful portrait of his creative indiv duality. They are as large and massive the hands of Rachmaninov. Tenths are them a natural interval. There is one pla in the Finale of the *Symphonic Studies* everybody knows it—that gives pianis a lot of trouble: a chain of tenths in the le hand in rapid tempo. As often as not rus are resorted to: some take the two notes i succession, others replace the tenths by o taves. Richter plays them as easily and na urally as the giant in the fairy tale tak the seven league stride.

Richter's hands remind you of the Cycl pean structures we see in archeological a bums. It is not only their size. They seem be hewn out of stone. No aristocratic marb this, fragile and plastic; but common grani handled not with the sculptor's chisel b with the stone axe of a primeval carver.

These hands are strangers to nervousnes to the trembling that comes from exhalt tion—they are well-balanced entities. N impassive, though, by far. They know th light touch that brings forth sounds as del cate as a breeze and they know the weigh

ponderous chords when a great concert hall sounds with a mighty "Forte" produced ot by a force but by the mere impact of bone nd muscle. Neither are these hands too good-ıtured. The energy confined in them now nd again will break forth. The pianist will e sitting motionless at the piano and all of sudden, as we see it, say in the octave pas-ges in the first movement of the B-Flat Minor oncerto of Chaikovsky, his hands as though ·ized by a sudden paroxysm of frenzy me down on the keyboard like the onrush a mighty storm. And in that frenzy there both an elemental sweep and naivetê. nd you feel that in that music there is no ace of the artistic elegance so inseparable om the accepted notion of the brilliant rtuoso style. So—you think to yourself, eethoven, the indomitable plebeian, might ve played.

These tempests speak of power, of Richter's rbulent temperament, and they speak of nething else—of the physical element minating the spiritual. It should be stressed that this is indeed the case with Richter in certain spheres of his repertoire—pre-eminently in the sphere of romantic emotionalism, in his renderings of Liszt and partly of Chopin which are not yet completely within his grasp.

Liszt's demonism has not yet found its way into the soul of Richter, a soul essentially healthy in its fundamentals. But Richter is supreme in Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, Brahms and Rachmaninov. He is among the first interpreters of Prokofyev's music. At one of his concerts this spring he played Debussy's *Moonlight* with a marvellous penetration into the mysteries of impressionistic colour. He may perhaps, before long be playing even the demoniac Liszt as Richter should play him. And perhaps not. Surely a selective choice in contrast to catholicity of taste is a vital characteristic of the thinking artist. And surely the things that Richter can already accomplish give him right of place among the most interesting and promising of young pianists.

DAVID RABINOVICH

LITERATURE

AT THE WRITERS' CLUB

The writers who assembled at a social gathering at the Writers' Club a week or so ago were men who had roughed it side by side with our soldiers in hard and dangerous campaigns throughout the war years and penned their writings in verse and prose on every sector of a vast front stretching from the Barents to the Black Sea.

Their names are widely known. Alexander Tvardovski, the author of *Vassili Terkin*, that popular poem about the Russian soldier-hero, Sergei Mikhalkov, joint author with the late El-Registan, of the words of the Soviet national anthem, Evgeni Dolmatovski, Alexei Surkov, Stepan Shchipachev and Sergei Vassiliev whose lyrics and front-line songs are so well known among the people; the prose-writers, Vassili Grossman, Vadim Kozhevnikov and Alexander Isbakh who have recorded in their pages the grim truth of war. Some, like the playwrights Vsevolod Vishnevsky and Alexander Kron and the poet Alexander Zharov have gone for their subject matter to the life and doings of our sailors while the articles of the critics Johann Altmann and Semyon Tregub regularly appeared in the columns of front-line newspapers.

In an interesting address Vsevolod Vishnevsky told how 943 members of the Soviet Writers' Union, responding to their country's call, had gone out to the front, in the very first days of the war. Many had fallen in battle. The roll of honour was read by the poet Stepan Shchipachev: among many others we heard the names of Arcadi Gaidar, the talented children's writer, Vladimir Stavsky, well-known author of front-line sketches, Yuri Krymov, the young novelist, and Alexander Roskin, a promising critic.

The speaker dwelt on some new names that made their appearance during the war and gained the appreciation of a wide reading public: the partisan Petro Vershigora, author of *People With a Clear Conscience*; Anatoli Kalinin whose two novels *In the South* and *Comrades* are so well known; Valentin Ovechkin, Vera Panova and others.

Readings by the authors themselves of verses, poems and songs born during the war concluded an interesting evening.

TO THE MEMORY OF MATE ZALKA

An audience of littérateurs present at an evening dedicated to the memory of Mate Zalka, Hungarian revolutionary and writer, listened to the thrilling biography of a man to whom the sword was as familiar as the pen. As a young revolutionary he fought in the Civil War in Russia which was to him his second homeland. His third he found in Spain for whose freedom he fought and died like a hero.

Excerpts were read from the letters of a comrade-in-arms of Mate Zalka. The sparing, heartfelt words speak of the courage of Zalk of his gifts as a commander. The memory "General Lukacz" under which name Ma Zalka was known among the Spanish pe ple, is profoundly venerated by revolutio ary Spain.

"When Mate Zalka came to Spain," sa the Spanish journalist E. Simorra, "it w to write a page of its history not in ink, b in his own blood. He exchanged the pen f the sword when only the sword could sa the pen. . . ."

The works of Mate Zalka are truthful ar sincere, instinct with the romance of t revolutionary struggle, calling the yout to heroic deeds of valour and self-sacrific

AN INTERVIEW WITH CONSTANTIN FEDIN

Fedin's first literary efforts date from t time he was nineteen years old. Among tho who were interested in his early writin was Maxim Gorky. These two — the famou Gorky and the obscure beginner, Fedin, we drawn close together. Fedin fought in Worl War I, was a pri oner of war i Germany an went to Switze land to recupe ate. He knows h Europe well—th action of man of his tales is lai in foreign lands Among his best known books ar *Cities and Years*, *The Brothers* an *The Rape of Eu rope*, the story *San atorium "Arktur"* *The First Joys*[1]— his last novel— was printed i the monthly pe riodical *Novy Mir* (New World).

Fedin shows us into his study. He live in a tall house, opposite the old building o the Tretyakov Art Gallery, near the riverside where many of Moscow's writers live. His desk illumined by a massive lamp and covere with books and manuscripts, stands near th window. We sit down on the leather sofa Fedin is smoking his pipe.

"I see there's a little scar on your face," I say, "a memory of the automobile acciden in Nürenberg, isn't it?"

"Well, no, it's an old scar. It's more notice able now. Since I've become a grandfathe I suppose."

"What is it like being a grandfather?"

"Perfectly delightful."

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[1] See *International Literature* No. 10. 1945 for the first four chapters of this novel.

He bears the honours of his new position lightly (the baby granddaughter is four months old). His blue eyes are very bright and his good-looking face quite youthful.

"Just what did happen to you at Nürenberg?"

"My leg was injured and I was in hospital for a whole month. But I don't count that time as lost. Every experience is food for a writer. That hospital taught me a lot. I know now what Hitler Germans are like."

He goes on to say that the Hitler-trained generation are people who've had everything that's human knocked out of them. The young people are the worst.

"They leave a painful impression," Fedin says. "It will take a lot of effort to re-educate them."

"What are you working on at present?"

"I'm busy with the second novel of my trilogy.

First Joys is a complete book. I don't know yet what I'm going to call the second novel. . . It's the year 1919 in a Russian provincial town."

He says, he is completely engrossed by the epoch.

"My heroes? The principal characters in *First Joys* will appear again in the second novel. There will be new people, too. Kirill will be the central figure, and Lisa will be there. Will she leave her husband whom she married in obedience to her parents' will? That I'm not going to tell. It would be giving away family secrets. You like Lisa, you say? She does not resemble my former heroines. The treatment is quite different. There was a time, you know, when an entirely realistic presentation of one's characters seemed out-of-date. We were searching for new forms and methods. But that's all over now. I enjoy creating plastic vividly-real images. I myself find pleasure in feeling how real they are. I am quite carried away by my own novel."

"What about Anochka? Will she become an actress?"

"Oh, yes, Anochka is going to be an actress, of course. Will she marry Kirill? That I don't know. I don't yet know whether she will want to. Pushkin used to say that he was very anxious for Tatyana to marry Onegin, but she refused to. The fate of a hero, you see, does not always depend on the author. A character will dictate events quite unexpectedly. The development of the plot will as often as not take the author along lines he never contemplated."

"That's that," he said in conclusion. . . "Come along now; I'll show you my granddaughter."

SHOLOM ALEIKHEM

"I've received your book and read it; laughed and cried over it—a wonderful book. It sparkles throughout with love for the people, such a kindly, honest and wise book." So wrote Maxim Gorky in 1910, in a letter to the talented Jewish writer, Sholom Aleikhem.

Thirty years have passed since Sholom Aleikhem's death. A memorial evening held in Moscow and attended by the scientists, students, workers, actors and prominent public men opened with an address by Constantine Fedin. An admirable paper on the life and works of Sholom Aleikhem was read by the eminent actor, Solomon Mikhoels, who on the stage of the Moscow Jewish Theatre has created an unforgettable image of one of the finest heroes of Sholom Akleikhem—Tevye the milkman.

To the day of his death which found him far away from his native land—in America—Sholom Aleikhem never lost touch with the cultural life of his country. It was Russia that he always regarded as his homeland. Among the private papers found after his death was one bearing the famous passage from Gogol's *Dead Souls*: "It has been ordained by a wondrous power that for a long time to come I should walk hand in hand with my strange heroes, contemplating the vast rush of life, surveying it through laughter that is visible to the world and tears that are invisible."

LITERARY TUESDAYS AT THE FACTORY

Theatrical performances, concerts, lectures and movies are held daily at the Palace of Culture, the clubhouse belonging to the Stalin Automobile Works in Moscow. There are some excellent ensembles—dramatic, chorus and dancing, composed of the factory's own workers.

The literary Tuesdays are a popular feature. The workers assemble in the Large Hall of the Factory to hear such masters of the spoken word as Dmitri Zhuravlev, Suren Kocharyan, or Anton Schwartz give readings from the finest works of Russian and western writers. At one of the recent Tuesdays dedicated to Sholom Aleikhem, an interesting paper by the eminent actor and producer, Solomon Mikhoels, was followed by a programme of Sholom Aleikhem's stories read by Emmanuel Kaminka.

The men of the Moscow Lathe Building Works have their literary Fridays which are also most enjoyable. *What I Am Going to Read* was the subject, a week or so ago, of a talk in which many subscribers of the factory library took part. At these Fridays new books are discussed and opinions exchanged.

MUSEUM-HOUSES

Not very far from the town of Tula there is a small railway station bearing the name of Leo Tolstoy. It was here that the great writer spent the last days of his life and that he died on November 7th, 1910. The room he occupied has been preserved untouched. The whole world remembers the story of how eighty-two-year-old Tolstoy left his home at Yasnaya Polyana. Death overtook him on his way, in the modest little house of the station-master. In those autumn days of 1910 the eyes of the world were focussed on that death-bed in the little wayside station. It is now a branch of the Central Leo Tolstoy Museum, and one of the five museums in the U.S.S.R. dedicated to the life and works of the author of *War and Peace*.

The house in Odessa where Alexander Pushkin lived in the twenties of the last century

and which was partially destroyed by the fascists, is now being restored. It is proposed to collect within its walls all the material bearing on Pushkin's life in the South; the literary almanacs of the time and first editions of those of Pushkin's works which are dedicated to Odessa. The Museum will also house the Odessa Branch of the Ukrainian Union of Soviet Writers.

MOSCOW'S EIGHT-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

Our Country is the general title of a series of books consisting of thirty-two volumes to be put out by the *Young Guard* Publishing House.

In connection with Moscow's eight-hundredth anniversary in April 1947, the volume dedicated to Moscow has been the first to go to press.

The book is divided into sections. The historical survey is a narration of the life of the town from its beginning to our own days. The first four chapters are contributed by Sergei Bakhrushin, the noted historian.

The next two, dealing with the years between 1917 and the post-war period are from the pen of Pavel Lopatin.

Section II gives a panorama of the city, a geographical description of modern Moscow, with references to its past and a cultural history. Section III is a picture of underground Moscow: Metro, telephone, water works, gasworks, the subterranean economy of the capital. The theme of Section IV is Moscow in the records of contemporaries and in belles-lettres, a rich and varied assortment, since there is scarcely a Russian writer or poet who has not dedicated some of his works to Moscow. Moscow in Figures is the name of Section V.

THEATRE

LENINGRAD THEATRES

Leningrad has long been known as one of the main centres of Russian art. Now, after the war, theatrical life in the city has come into its own again. While capital restoration work is going on in theatrical buildings that have been damaged or destroyed by the war, the companies are staging their productions in the Palaces of Culture. Here is an idea of what the Leningrad theatres have been showing during the '45 to '46 season.

The House where Leo Tolstoy died, at Astapovo Station

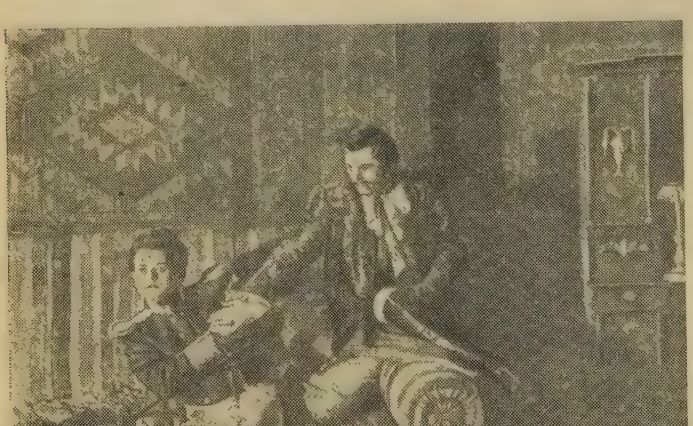
After something more than half a century of oblivion, the Chaikovsky opera, *The Maid of Orleans* (after Schiller) has been revived at the Kirov (formerly the Mariinsky), Leningrad's oldest theatre of opera and ballet. After its first appearance, also in Leningrad, sixty-five years ago, the opera enjoyed success at Prague, only to disappear for many years from opera repertoire. This imposing heroic opera has now been brilliantly revived.

Leaving the monumental perron of the Cathedral of Rheims and the austere apartments of Charles VII—the scene of the action of *The Maid of Orleans*—we follow *Cinderella* the theatre's second première, to a light-hearted enchanting world of fairy tale interpreted in the language of dancing. Prokofyev's music gives the Kirov ballet troupe splendid opportunities to show its art. Cinderella and the Prince are danced by Natalia Dudinskaya and Constantine Sergeyev, both Stalin Prize winners.

Eugene Onegin and the *Queen of Spades* are as popular in the new productions as they have ever been before.

The production of Chaikovsky's *Iolanthe* at the Maly Opera Theatre has won the Stalin Prize for its producer, Boris Khaikin.

A recent première here was Prokofyev's *War and Peace* after the novel by



From the Opera "War and Peace" by Sergei Prokofyev staged by the Kirov State Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad. Scene in Dolokhov's Study; K. Dorozhinsky as Dolokhov (right) and F. Andrukovich as Kuragin

Tolstoy, staged by Samuil Samosud who was responsible for the production of the first operas by Shostakovich, Dzerzhinsky, Zhelobinsky and Kabalevsky and whose work earned the theatre the name of the laboratory of Soviet opera. The subject matter of *War and Peace* is so extensive that it will be performed for two nights running: (eight scenes to each performance). The central scene of Part I is laid at Borodino in which some two hundred and fifty actors take part.

The Pseudo-Bridegroom, a new ballet by Mikhail Chulaki, the Leningrad composer, has been given a good reception. The libretto is after Goldoni's comedy *A Servant of Two Masters*. The colourful ballet in true comedy style with excellent dance music and amusing plot is drawing full houses.

The Opera Studio of the Conservatory, Leningrad's third opera theatre, where our coming opera soloists receive their baptism of fire, has shown during this, first post-war season, Dargomyzhsky's *Mermaid* after the drama of Pushkin.

The performances of the Leningrad Theatre of Musical Comedy, which worked on undaunted throughout the blockade, are as popular as ever. Among the favourites are two original operettas by Solovyev-Sedoy and Zhelobinsky with scenes laid in the war-days; a new version of Milleker's *Beggar Student* and Milyutin's *The Maidens A-flutter*, a melodious operetta after a story of Averkyev, a popular Russian playwright of the end of the 19th century.

The oldest theatre of drama in Leningrad is the Pushkin, formerly the Alexandrinsky Theatre. For one hundred and ten years now it has been playing in the classical building designed by Rossi. The names of the bright stars on that horizon are widely known. They are Vera Michurina-Samoilova, Yuri Yuryev, Ekaterina Korchagina-Alexandrovskaya, Constantine Skorobogatov who created unforgettable scenic images of Lenin and Suvorov; and Nikolai Cherkassov and Nikolai Simonov of cinema fame.

We have seen there some excellent presentations of Soviet plays. Utevsky's *Memorable Meetings* and *For Those at Sea* by Boris Lavrenev show us life and men as they are today.

The Gorky Theatre of Drama which was back in Leningrad before the blockade was lifted, opened the season with Ostrovsky's *The Heart's Not Made of Stone*. Shakespeare's *King Lear*, another new production was done admirably thanks to the united efforts of cinema-producer Grigori Kozintsev, composer Dmitri Shostakovich and the artist Nathan Altmann.

The leading role in Constantine Simonov's *Beneath the Chestnuts of Prague* is in the able hands of Dmitri Dudnikov, one of the best interpreters of Hamlet on the Soviet stage.

Outstanding among the new productions at the Comedy Theatre is a caustically satirical version of Priestley's *The Inspector Calls* running under the name of *You Will Not Forget This*; an old Russian vaudeville, high-spirited and vivacious, *Lev Gurych Sinichkin*, and a French vaudeville by Labiche *The Journey of Perrichon*.

The Leningrad New Theatre is regaling audiences with *The Lady-Minister*, a witty rendering of the comedy by the Jugoslav playwright Nušič.

Following on Ostrovsky's *Last Sacrifice*, the Lenin Komsomol Theatre is showing *A Fairy Tale About Truth*, a lyrical piece by Margarita Aligher, centring round the figure of Hero of Soviet Union, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the daring Moscow schoolgirl who was martyred by the fascists. *Tristan and Iseult*, a drama by Alexandra Brustein and a dramatic version of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* are in rehearsal.

The repertoires of the Leningrad Theatres for Children are varied and well-chosen. The oldest among these playhouses catering to the young is about to celebrate its twenty-fifth birthday. In a thrilling modern play recently shaped on its boards called *Friendship on the Seas* the children saw Far Northern fishermen gallantly doing their bit in the Patriotic War. Samuil Marshak's fairy tale, *Twelve Months* also makes a delightful spectacle.

NEW PERFORMANCES FOR CHILDREN

The Moscow Theatres for Juveniles are showing two plays this summer.

A little boy, just an ordinary little boy, had a wonderful adventure. He found himself, in his dreams, in the kingdom of Cards, in a country peopled with Queens and Knaves and Sixes and Tens. And at the head of it, right enough, there was a King, the King of Hearts. *The Jolly Dream* by Sergei Mikhalkov, tells Soviet children all about the wonderful adventures of little Andryusha. The boy-hero and the youthful spectators of the Central Theatre for Children find themselves in a world of thrills. A world alive with all kinds of passions, too—envy and treachery, goodness and valour. Andryusha has a fight with the Minister Brigella, a traitor; he helps Prince Tartaglia to find the three magic oranges growing in the enchanted garden of Morgana, the wicked fairy. Using some devices and images from Carlo Gozzi's classical fairy tales, the author has given us an interesting play unfolding before the eyes of the children a veritable kaleidoscope of vivid and exhilarating pictures and events. The rhymed lines alternating with the witty prose of the dialogue flow in natural simplicity, telling of difficulties overcome, of courage and resolve.

The staging is a good piece of work abounding in skilful and inventive devices in which we see Valentin Kolesayev, one of the most proficient of our juvenile theatre regisseurs, at his best. The effective scenery is the work of Alberto Sanchez, a Spanish painter, who has come to work on the Soviet stage. The commissioned music is by Lev Schwartz. If the boy Andryusha wins the hearts of his spectators, it is due in no small measure to the talented acting of Tatyana Bulkina. To play the part of a child, a boy withal, before an audience of children is no easy task. Bulkina is simple and true to life, without exaggerated boyishness, just open-hearted and charming.

In *The Heirs*, at the Moscow Theatre for Children we follow the adventures of four schoolboys who together with their old geology master are out on a quest after a treasure that lies buried, according to old legend, some-

where in the Ural mountains. A lot of things happen, some dangerous, some laughable. The treasure turns out to be a rusty old iron kettle stuffed to the brim with paper money, long out of use. But during their wanderings the youngsters have come on a really worthwhile find—a tungsten deposit. That means electric bulbs, wings for airplanes—a splendid present for their country.

This is a lively picture of schoolboy life and manners, well written by Alexandra Brustein and Alexei Uspensky, and ably rendered by Arcadi Vovsi, the regisseur. The acting is good, each personage standing out as an individual character. The scenery by Alexander Vassilyev carries you into the heart of theUral landscape.

THE THEATRE OF THE BALTIC FLEET

Prominent in the repertoire of the Theatre of the Baltic Fleet which has spent its first post-war season at Tallin (Esthonia), are Sheridan's *Rivals*, J. B. Priestley's *The Inspector Calls* and two modern Soviet pieces: Constantine Simonov's *Beneath the Chestnuts of Prague* and *Old Friends* by Leonid Malyugin. This summer the troupe is on tour at Kronstadt. They had been eagerly looking forward to the journey and no wonder. It was at Kronstadt that the Theatre of the Baltic Fleet was founded fifteen years ago. The company had visited the fortress-town on several occasions during the war-years.

A NEW PRODUCTION AT THE GYPSY THEATRE

The Enchanted Pilgrim is the name of a tale by Leskov, a Russian writer of the 19th century. A dramatized version of it is scoring success at "Romen", the Moscow Gypsy Theatre, under the name of *Grushenka*.

Classical works dealing with Gypsy life have time and again been adapted for the stage. For years at a stretch we have had performances of *Carmen* after Mérimée,of the *Gypsies* after Pushkin; of Lope de Vega's *Little Gypsy Girl*, and of the *Bloody Wedding Feast*, by Federico Garcia Lorka.

Grushenka takes us to a small Russian provincial town in the second half of the last century. A Gypsy chorus is performing at a restaurant. There is talk of the Gypsies being sent out of the town, but the danger is averted by the local landowner, a Prince who is smitten by the charms of Grushenka, a lovely young Gypsy girl. The Prince pays fifty thousand rubles down, a good round sum, to have the Gypsies legally registered and left unmolested. In return he makes a demand for Grushenka. Her father says he prefers a nomad life and poverty to having his daughter shamed. Thereupon Grushenka, to save her people, resolves to go to the Prince herself, thinking to deceive him and make her escape. But she is not proof against the Prince's charms and gives herself up to love with all the abandonment of youthful passion. What follows is the old, old story. The Prince soon tires of the young Gypsy, he has gone to no small expense over the affair, too, and thinks to mend his affairs by a wealthy marriage. He leaves Grushenka when she is about to become a mother. She resolves to take her own life. She finds a faithful friend in Ivan Flyagin, nicknamed Golovan, trainer and breaker in of horses in the Prince's stables. He sees the hopelessness of Grushenka's position and helps her to carry out her desperate resolve.

The new production shows excellent progress in the work of the "Romen" theatre and reveals new colours in the art of its leading actress, Lyalya Chernaya. After the romantic

Scene from "Grushenka", *staged by the "Romen" Gipsy Theatre*

and folklore genre of its former productions, Boris Vershilov, the regisseur, shows us a truly realistic piece of acting. The excellent scenery by Vladimir Dmitryev is a potent factor of success—the streets, homes and landscapes of a small Russian town are done in sparing, laconic strokes.

The mass scenes with chorus and Gypsy dancing are excellent as usual.

GLIKERIA FEDOTOVA

The year 1946 marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great Russian actress Glikeria Fedotova, an important date in the history of the Russian theatre. She was born in

Glikeria Fedotova as Katerina in "The Storm" *by Ostrovsky*

the town of Orel on May 22nd, 1846, and as a child of ten was brought to Moscow and placed in a theatrical school. It was at a school performance staged there a few years later by Ivan Samarin, an outstanding actor of the time, that she scored her first success on the stage, playing the title role in a play called *The Child*.

After the performance was over the venerable Mikhail Shchepkin, the founder of the Russian realistic school in drama, said, addressing the young actress: "Take no heed of success, everyone delights in seeing a little girl acting, but if you do not advance in your art, your success will come to an end. The gift that has been bestowed on you imposes a great responsibility. Remember that, and work hard all your life!"

She had never forgotten those words and when she had become a great actress, she would often say: "I always remember Shchepkin's warning—my hair is grey, but I have never yet acted in a single part carelessly, without studying it and thinking it over all round."

Fedotova's whole life as an actress was given up to the stage of the Moscow Maly Theatre. Over three hundred parts she acted behind its footlights. She created some wonderful images of the Russian classical drama—Griboyedov, Ostrovsky, Turgenev. She had nineteen Shakespearian roles in her repertoire, among them Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, Mistress Ford in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Some of her impersonations in French classical drama were magnificent, such as Elvira in Molière's *Tartuffe* and Susannah in *The Marriage of Figaro*, by Beaumarchais. Every sentence, every gesture was with her a thing of beauty. Several generations of Maly Theatre actors were educated under her personal guidance or in the traditions of her school.

A long and painful illness removed Fedotova from the stage for years before she died. But never for a day were her close ties with the theatre broken, young actors constantly came to her house for advice and guidance. And she was ever ready to receive them and give them the benefit of her knowledge and vast experience.

Fedotova died in Moscow, in the year 1925.

On the day of her centenary, a memorial service was held at the actress' grave and there was a memorial meeting at the Moscow House of the Actor.

SIXTY YEARS ON THE STAGE

The history of the Russian theatre has known "dynasties" of actors with records of a hundred years' and more service to the stage. A representative of the dynasty of the Samoilovs is Vera Michurina-Samoilova, who has devoted sixty years of her life to the theatre. It was as a little girl that she first stepped onto the boards of the old Alexandrinsky Theatre where she is still playing.

From the very first she drew the attention of audiences and critics by a nobleness of manner and depth of insight in her acting. She received an excellent education—travelled extensively abroad, visiting the best European theatres—was acquainted with Sarah Bernhardt, Réjane, Monnet-Sulli, and other outstanding actors.

Michurina-Samoilova has created some unforgettable images: a splendid Lady Milford in Schiller's *Kabal und Liebe*, an exquisite Sophia in Griboyedov's *Wit Works Woe*, Gurmyzhskaya, the old Russian landed proprietress in Ostrovsky's *Forest*.

Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik, translator and playwright, another representative of the old theatrical Russian family of the Shchepkins, says in speaking of Michurina-Samoilova: "Stately, severe and distinguished-looking she is indissolubly merged in my mind with the image of Petersburg. 'The Soul of Petersburg,' that mysterious, indefinable something that can be sensed in the *Bronze Horseman* of Pushkin, in Gogol's *Nevsky Prospect*, in Dostoyevsky's *White Nights* had laid its spell on her from her youth."

In the grim years of the blockade this love for her native city showed itself with striking force. Despite her age and ill-health the actress did not leave the city. She remained where she was—in her home in the old house designed by Rossi, in her old-fashioned, vaulted rooms with the portraits of her actor-ancestors hanging on the walls. She continued acting, teaching, speaking over the radio: her voice was firm—she imparted her unswerving courage to her listeners.

MUSIC

SONGS BY YURI SHAPORIN

Yuri Shaporin has completed a series of new songs, consisting of eight elegies to the text by Russian poets Mikhail Lermontov, Nikolai Yazykov, Fyodor Tyutchev, Nikolai Ogarev, Alexei Fet, Ivan Bunin, Innokenty Annensky, and Alexander Blok. The elegies are united because of the poetic idea underlying all these poems. The idea is that of purity and exaltation of love.

Russian lyrical songs have in the course of hundreds of years always contained that chastity and depth which Glinka and Chaikovsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, Taneyev and Rachmaninov ascribed to the sublime moods of the human soul.

Yuri Shaporin has not repeated what was said before him. He has found new means of expression in order to sing the strength and pathos of human emotions.

Shaporin's melody reveals a deep insight into the hidden meaning of a poetic line. The composer knows how to catch the nuances of the poet's lyrical intonations, he is able to convey the main tone of the poem. Shaporin's songs offer a harmony of the word with the melody, and their strength lies in this.

The piano accompaniment is finely woven, it assists in the creation of a poetical meditative atmosphere. It is not an accompaniment, but a voice which joins in with the singer.

SONGS OF GORI

Vano Muradeli has written a new vocal composition entitled *Songs of Gori*. Popular melodies have been used for his ten songs.

Gori is a little town in the sunny Caucasus, and is the birthplace of Stalin. Here old songs are passed from generation to generation. They express the poetical freedom-loving spirit of the mountaineers. According to the composer he heard the melodies sung by his father, a passionate admirer and connoisseur of old songs. When working on the Gori songs, Vano Muradeli tried to give them a form which would be appreciated by the general audience and would be at the same time interesting for the professional musician. The texts of the songs are partly folklore, and partly belong to the pen of poets Avetik Isaakian and Ovanes Tumanian, translated into Russian by Alexander Blok and Constantine Balmont.

Besides the *Songs of Gori* the composer wrote two new comic songs named *Tiflis Sketches.*

AMONG THE MUSICIANS OF THE URALS

Three representatives of the musical world of the Soviet capital, Igor Boelza, Professor of the Moscow Conservatory, the Conductor Nikolai Anosov and the balletmeister of the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre Rostislav Zakharov returned to Moscow recently from a trip to the Urals.

Igor Boelza in a talk with our correspondent pointed out that before the Revolution professional musical culture in the Urals was limited to separate concerts of visiting celebrities and rare opera and ballet performances. The only carrier of musical culture in the Urals was its people. It has preserved in wonderful songs its brave tenacity and the severe beauty of nature in the North country.

These songs have been used by many Ural composers as the foundation of their work.

"The concerts which we attended in Sverdlovsk have shown that in the last few years composers of the Urals have done excellent work in all the genres of music. I shall mention only three of the musicians.

A brilliant pianist, remarkable composer and prominent civic worker, Markian Frolov who died only a few months ago, did much for the musical culture of the Urals. He was the founder and for many years director and professor of the Sverdlovsk Conservatory, organized in 1935.

Among Markian Frolov's works are the opera *Ehne Bulat Bator* (to the subject of the legend about the national hero of the Buryat-Mongol people), a pianoforte concerto, and many pieces for the piano. Among the piano pieces especial interest is attached to the sonata, completed by the composer shortly before his death and excellently played by his daughter Svetlana, a student of the Sverdlovsk Conservatory.

The works of the second composer Victor Trambitsky include *The Storm*, an opera to the subject of Ostrovsky's drama, and a recently completed symphony, which we heard played by the Sverdlovsk Conservatory orchestra conducted by Mark Paverman. It is a major work in four parts dedicated to the memory of the Soviet writer Nikolai Ostrovsky, author of the book *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Trambitsky's symphony is excellently arranged and is melodious and emotionally expressive. We found the second part particularly interesting; it is written in the style of a North-Russian peasant dance and has a good deal in common with Trambitsky's *Horovody* piano pieces, now being published in Moscow.

Oleg Eiges likewise belongs among the masters. At the age of forty, he has already composed six symphonies, five piano sonatas, a piano concerto, a trio, and many other works. The author, a brilliant pianist, invariably takes part in the rendition of his own works.

The composer played to us his new sonata, which is now being published in Moscow, and sketches for a symphony with a final chorus to the words of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. This symphony promises to be highly interesting.

Both Trambitsky and Eiges told us much about their pupils —young composers, students of the Sverdlovsk Conservatory.

We visited the Lunacharsky Opera House

at Sverdlovsk. During the last few years this theatre has staged thirty-seven operas and thirteen ballets, among them the best works of Russian and West-European classic and modern composers.

We saw Verdi's *Othello*. Both the orchestra conducted by Arnold Margulian and the choir headed by Alexander Preobrazhensky were splendid. The staging is done carefully and with much thought.

The size of the stage allowed director Efim Brill and stage designer Alexander Kuzmin to produce an interesting performance. Arnold Azrikan, who starred in the part of Othello, won the admiration of the audience not only by his excellent singing but by his histrionic talent. Kiselevskaya in the part of Desdemona has understood the secret of "the eternal feminine" which Shakespeare invested in his heroines, and Olga Loginova, a graduate of the Sverdlovsk Conservatory gave a brilliant performance as Emilia.

The production was awarded the Stalin Prize for 1945.

Thus since the Sverdlovsk production of *Othello* could have honoured any theatre of Moscow or Leningrad, the difference between the "provinces" and the capital is gradually disappearing in our country.

CINEMA

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN CINEMA

The cinema appeared in Russia fifty years ago. The first short films, made by Lumière in 1895, were first shown in Petersburg on May 16, 1896, during the intermission of some jolly revue at the "Aquarium" amusement park.

The next day the newspaper *St. Petersburg Leaflet* wrote: "The impression made on the public was astounding. The success was so great, that on public demand the picture, which showed the arrival of a train, had to be shown repeatedly."

After St. Petersburg and Moscow the "cinematograph" appeared in other Russian towns. Maxim Gorky, then a cub reporter, wrote in the local paper about one of the first shows in Nizhni-Novgorod:

"I saw Lumière's "cinematograph"—moving pictrues. The impression made by it is so unusual, so original and complex that I can hardly succeed in conveying all of its nuances, but yet I shall endeavour to set down the essence of it.

"Carriages come out of the distance right on to you, into the darkness where you are sitting, people are coming, coming, from somewhere far off, growing larger as they approach. In the foreground children are playing with a dog, bicycles are rolling, pedestrians are crossing the road, making way between the carriages. Everything is moving, living, seething, coming to the foreground of the picture and then disappearing somewhere. . . ."

This is how Gorky depicted "Rue de la République á Lyon." This film, sixteen metres long lasted one minute on the screen! But young Gorky then predicted a great future for the films. He wrote: "This invention can be indubitably foretold to be widely used because of its astounding originality."

The films spread rapidly over Russia. They were shown in summer theatres, circuses, at fairs, or sometimes simply in empty shop premises and barns. Later special cinema houses with intriguing names such as *Charms, Mirage, Phantasy* and *Revels* were opened in various Russian towns.

In 1908 the first films were produced in Russia, showing scenes from Russian life. Five pictures were produced in the first year: the next year there were twelve, among them *The Power of Darkness* after Leo Tolstoy, *Marriage* after Nikolai Gogol, and *Song About the Merchant Kalashnikov* after Mikhail Lermontov. Between 1908 and 1914 over fifty films were produced in Russia after works of Tolstoy, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Ostrovsky, Dostoyevsky, Nekrasov, Chekhov, and Gorky.

Popular stage actors began playing in the films. Olga Gsovskaya, Pyotr Baksheyev and Ivan Bersenev came from the Art Theatre, Vladimir Maximov, of the Maly Theatre became a film "star" of the first magnitude. Such popular actors as Nikolai Radin, Mikhail Klimov, and Oleg Frelich came from other theatres to play in the films. The name of Jacov Protazanov became prominent among the directors.

After the Revolution of 1917 the films, which Lenin once called the most "mass art" of all, became a national state undertaking in Russia.

A great flourishing of Soviet films started around 1925, when such pictures as *Potemkin* by Sergei Eisenstein, *Mother* by Vsevolod Pudovkin, and *Arsenal* by Alexander Dovzhenko appeared on the screen. A galaxy of talented directors arose in the filming industry—Friedrich Ermler, Sergei Yutkevich, Grigory Kozintzev, Leonid Trauberg, and Juli Raizman. Large cinema studios were constructed in Moscow, Kiev, and other towns.

The first sound films appeared in 1931—they were *Road to Life, Alone*, and *Golden Mountains*. The cinema school, founded in the first years after the Revolution, was reorganized into the State Institute of Cinematography, educating actors, directors and cameramen.

The sound-films *Chapayev, Lenin in October, the Maxim Gorky Trilogy, The Great Citizen, Peter I*, and so on, received world recognition. Many valuable artistic and documentary films were made in the years of World War II.

The post-war five-year plan for the rehabilitation and development of the film industry opens up broad perspectives for cinema art in the U.S.S.R.

A CAMERA-MAN AT THE FRONT

The spectators seldom think about those who made war newsreels when they see episodes of fighting in the air, tank attacks, hard-fought battles. They rarely think of those whose bravery and courage made it possible to create a film record of the events of bygone war years.

One hundred fifty cameramen of the Soviet newsreel studios worked at the front throughout the war. The new Soviet film *Cameramen at the Front* tells the story of one of them, Vladimir Sushchinsky, who begun his work near Leningrad, then shot the battle for Mga, was transferred to the Ukraine, to the Dnieper. Together with the soldiers he forced the "gates of the Crimea"—Sivash, was among the first to enter liberated Sevastopol, traversed Poland and the Carpathians. The brave cameraman was killed on the eve of Victory Day in the battle for Breslau.

This is a film about the war days of a Soviet cameraman. The life of a soldier, says the narrator about Sushchinsky, became his life. And he courageously shared with the soldiers all the dangers and privations on behalf of his one aim: to show on the screen the truth about the war. The spectators see a picture of fierce fighting. Shells are exploding, lumps of earth fly up into the air, there is a rain of deadly metal. The men are hovering at the bottom of a trench just taken from the enemy. They again go into attack immediately. The cameraman probably also wanted to feel for a moment the salutary closeness of the earth, says the narrator. But in order to film the progress of the attack he was obliged to force himself to get up, to choose a spot suitable for his camera and to continue working. And the spectator sees the events as though he himself had been in their very midst, among the men.

While shooting a film Sushchinsky was wounded. He did not leave the battlefield but mounted a tank and shot the entire battle through the narrow vision panel of the tank.

The audience sees lines of men moving in the Carpathians and a shade slowly moving after them in the lower part of the still. That shade is the cameraman. Such stills with the cameraman's shade are usually not included in the continuity, because he should remain outside the film. But in this picture, says the narrator, they remain together; the cameraman with his heroes.

. . . Soviet soldiers are storming a railroad bank. The machine gunners are running to a new position. The cameraman is following them with his camera. From the new position the machine gun is rattling. A soldier with a hand grenade rushes over the bank. An explosion, a black spot on the film. Cameraman Vladimir Sushchinsky was killed by that shell explosion. His friend Boris Pumpiansky filmed his funeral. A few days later he also was killed during a combat flight.

ARTS

A VISIT TO NEW EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition of paintings by military artists from the Grekov Studio was opened on V-day in the Central House of the Red Army. The studio was founded in 1934 as a training centre for Red Army men with a talent for painting. In wartime the studio changed considerably. Military artists no longer worked over their canvases in the seclusion of the studio. They sketched durin the heat of the battle and worked on the fi ing line. All stages of the hostilities ar reflected in the works on display.

Drawings from the Nürenberg trial, fro the pen of N. Zhukov, director of the Studi attract most of the attention at the exh bition. His sketches are distinct for the fine touch, daring and at the same time reser ed, and for the sharp eye with which h saw each of his characters.

Zhukov has exhibited drawings of som of the defendants, their lawyers and witne ses, also *Americans in a Bus, French W men-Correspondents,* a snapshot sketch the writer Constantine Fedin, and an interes ing portrait composition entitled *Th World Judges.*

The exhibition on the whole is richer drawings than in paintings. Drawings b Klimashin and Vysotsky showing the storm ing of Berlin have interesting subject *Tatyana,* a portrait of a woman by Nemensky and *General Chuikov and a Nurse* by Lukon sky were the most popular among the portrait

The artist Krivonogov has exhibited large canvas called *Capitulation of Berli* The main attraction in this canvas is the va ried and artistic interpretation of charact in the faces of both the captured Germa and the Russian victors.

At the exhibition of the septuageneria artist Petro Petrovichev, organized in th Central House of Art Workers, we saw mo than a hundred canvases painted in th course of half a century. The earliest pictu *Drinking Tea* is dated 1898 and represen the artist's peasant family drinking tea ou of a samovar in a Russian "izba" (loghouse

The latest landscapes are dated 1943-194 Petrovichev, a pupil of Levitan, is a fine pain ter of Russian landscape and the old Russia towns. His pictures devoted to Rostov th Great have no claim to historical accuracy but excellently convey the atmosphere long bygone days.

His Volga landscapes are of no less interest The artist's manner of painting building and dwelling houses is highly original.

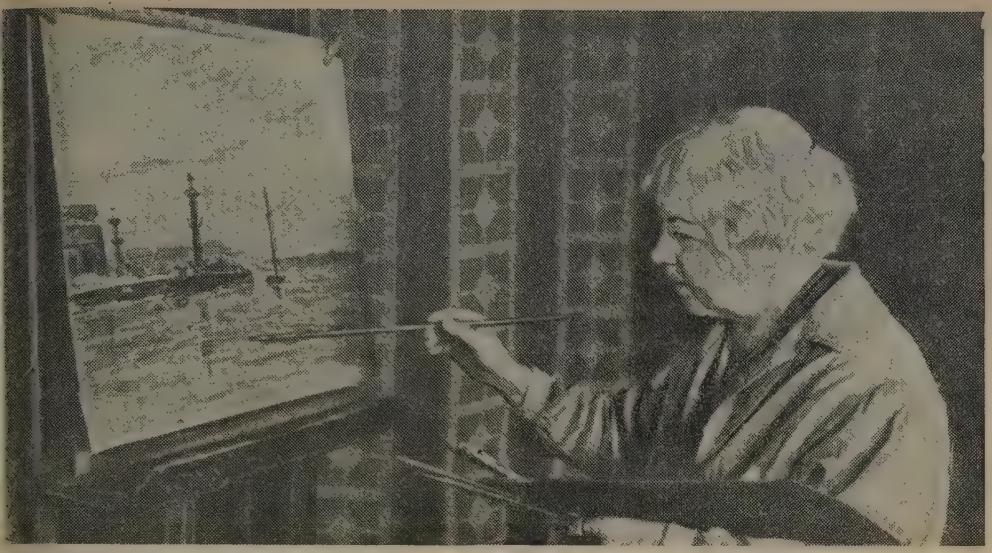
For him any creation of an architect i a part of animated nature. There is grea charm in the picture *Tolstoy's House i Khamovniki,* and *Chaikovsky's House.* Hi interiors are either very sparing of colou (*Alexander Ulyanov's Room, Lenin's Room*) or bright and festive (interiors of the museum in Ostankino and Kuskovo).

Petrovichev has preserved in his painting the traditions of Russian realism.

A VENERABLE SOVIET ARTIST

The current year has witnessed the se venty-fifth birthday of Anna Ostroumova Lebedeva, the Leningrad painter and etcher

Her first woodcuts exhibited in the begin ning of the century betokened a fresh an original talent. Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva is the poet par excellence of Leningrad an its picturesque environs, its palaces and parks Enshrined in her etchings are specimens o the different Russian building-styles: land scapes, architectural vistas of the shady gar



The artist Ostroumova-Lebedeva at work

ens of Tsarskoye Selo where the spirit of ushkin still seems to hover. . . Architecture is frozen music—how apt is the old mparison as you look at these architectural ensembles of Leningrad, its houses, railings, bridges depicted in all their noble and hythmic beauty. Among the portrait-etchings s an expressive likeness of Leo Tolstoy. Here too are some water-colours painted in ecent years. The Crimea and Caucasus landcapes are lush and colourful.

Ostroumova-Lebedeva took up art as profession in the early nineties under he guidance of Ilya Repin. In Paris she vorked under Whistler, the great impressionst, whose parting words to her were to look n her own self for instruction and guidance. After graduation from the Academy of Arts in 1900 she travelled a great deal. Ostroumova-Lebedeva is possessed of no mean literary gifts. Her *Reminiscences* published in 1935, have made her readers eagerly look forward to the promised sequel.

pictures of Moscow during the Great Patriotic War was on show. The genre scenes carry one back to those so recent years: Moscow men and women digging in their allotments on the outskirts of the city; a street of front-line Moscow, dark and barricaded, vanishing into the dim distance; two girls standing before a great poster in a sunlit square.

Besides some pictures and illustrations to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* we see sketches of stage scenery which figured in such recent productions as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Money Box* and *La Dame aux camélias*. They show a fine feeling for the stage and are excellently executed.

THE WORKS OF YURI PIMENOV

The One-Man evenings given for painters, sculptors and etchers at the Moscow Union of Artists are often held against a background of pictures, sketches and studies of the master in question that reveal a veritable laboratory of his art.

One such evening was recently dedicated to the painter Yuri Pimenov when a series of his

In New Moscow. By Yuri Pimenov

TALE OF A CITY

Who has not heard of towns which arise like a mirage before the tired traveller on a distant caravan road and disappear in the air without leaving a trace when one approaches?

The town which is the subject of this narrative will not disappear in the glaring heat of the desert; an automobile highway leads to it, this town pleases the eye with the luxurious foliage of its parks and the whiteness of its houses. Day and night one hears the ripple of fountains and the narrow canals.

In wartime hundreds of large industrial enterprises were shifted to the eastern part of the Soviet Union from the western and central regions. Settlements and new towns sprang up near the plants.

In those days many people came to Southwest Kazakhstan, a desert zone with severe continental climate. There are sandstorms in the summer and bitter frosts in the winter, with almost no rains or snow throughout the whole year. It was not easy to build a plant and town there.

The builders were faced with difficult problems; they had to conquer the elements, protect the future city from the hot winds and sandstorms, and create a "microclimate" in the town, different from the climate of the surrounding desert. The only ally they had was the river Urals, which in these parts forces its way through the sands with great difficulty.

A cape was chosen by the builders, washed from three sides by the waters of the river. On the fourth side they dug a canal, which turned the promontory into an island. But this was not enough; the island was surrounded by an earthen dam which encircled it ringwise. The main artery of the town's irrigation system starts on the dam. Day and night the water revolves in the locked ring of the dam, and, spreading out into a system of pipes and canals, runs to all the sections of the construction site. This allowed the builders to wash the salts out of the earth in a short period, to moisten the soil and plant tens of thousands of trees which took perfectly.

When the preparation of the territory assigned for construction had been completed, a new problem arose, what should they build with? The only materials available were clay, sandy earth, and stones from the river bank. They were all used for construction. The first houses in the workers' settlement were laid of earthen blocks, frequently used in Oriental architecture.

After having constructed a mill turning out waterproof gypsum, the builders were in possession of a building material successfully tested during the war both in the United States and the Soviet Union. This material is ideally suited for southern latitudes: slabs of this gypsum have good isolation qualities, they preserve warmth in the winter and protect from the heat in the summer. In a drough climate they acquire the firmness of a ston though at the beginning they are easily saw with a simple carpenter's saw. They do n require subsequent finishing and plastering their natural tone is as noble as that ivory.

The builders were dreaming not of a dra settlement of standard houses. They want the town to be an integral part of the lan scape of Kazakhstan. For this purpose th had to study Oriental methods of buildin which have been tested by centuries. T builders laboured with the patience and ma tery of a gardener. Picturesque houses wi typical Central Asiatic porches "aivaks slim columns chiselled by local workmen, cap tals and other ornaments for the railings a hanging balconies please the eye. The brig colours found in Kazakhstan rugs were us for painting the openings of porches a arcades.

The Orient has long been famous for t art of a loving and wise use of water. In t new town water plays in the large cups the basins and Central Asiatic pools, it shoo up in the pearl strings of the fountai and ripples softly, running down mar steps.

Today this town in the desert is populate A small semicircular square opens the way the town. Then it comes to a wide stre leading to the Central Square with its mu cipal buildings and shops. The Square is cl ed by a theatre building. Beyond it is t green amphitheatre of the sporting stadiu and park which runs down to the riv bank.

The town has a school, a kindergarten wi a nursery and a hospital. There is a large v riety of houses—hostels for unmarried wo kers, and apartment houses for four or s families with original open staircases, a cosy one-family cottages. All the houses ha electricity, telephone, radio and gas. T town is like an oasis in the desert, surround by a double ring of water and veget tion.

The builders of this town in the deser are I. Romanovsky, an engineer, and tv young architects, A. Arefiev and S. Va silliev. They were awarded the Stalin Pri for 1944.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Russian writer Vsevolod Garshin h a story about the proud beautiful palm "Att lea princeps". The palm grew in a hothou together with other trees. They were crowd and very often the trees quarreled and grun bled. "Attalea princeps" told them: "Gro higher, spread your bows, push on to t frames and panes, our hothouse will fa to pieces and we shall grow in freedom. But the plants considered her advice unreaso able. Then the powerful palm herself bro the glass roof of the hothouse with her gre crown. But she had to pay the price of h life for the deed. Men came and fell her.

The Botanical Garden of the Academy

iences of the U.S.S.R. is being laid out present in Ostankino, a Moscow suburb. trees will feel crowded here.

Academician Nikolai Tsitsin, the prominit selectionist, has been entrusted with the pervision of this new foundation.

Architects' sketches and blueprints furnish idea of the future garden. A beautiful acious square will spread out before its ain entrance. There will be fountains on e square and an amphitheatre of rare ees. In the background, as though crowning e entrance, will stand the statue which ne sculptress Vera Mukhina made for the aris Exposition.

Having passed through the gates of the main trance and by the lawns and multi-colour-l parterres the visitor will enter the spaous building of the Botanical Museum. undreds of diagrams and tables, thousands various plant collections and herbariums ll tell him an exciting tale of the history nd development of all the botanical gardens the world. The soldier will see here herbs hich saved his life, the engineer—technil plants producing raw material for indury, the gardener—fruit trees that are own in different climatic conditions, the easant—the grains of Europe, the United tates and Asia.

Immediately behind the Museum buildng there will be a vista of the main Hotouse.

This building, shining with light arches of ainless steel and glass, will be located on ne banks of a broad lake.

En route to the Hothouse the visitor will e gardens of various periods and styles. here will be Italian parks of the Renaissance, nd French classical gardens, and English ndscape parks of the period of Romanticism, nd gardens of Russia and various Soviet ational republics. To the right will be a rge lawn, flanked on both sides by rare rees and bushes from different parts of ne world. This will be the dendrarium, ne of the main sections of the Botanical arden.

Beyond the dendrarium and the glassy aters of the lake the visitor will find himelf in American forests. Huge evergreens ill raise their powerful crowns high into ne sky, the thick growth will be traversed y indented river banks, and wild streams nd waterfalls will descend with a roar from rtificial mountains.

Whatever may be the nationality of the uture visitor, he will invariably find the ora of his native country either in the Hotouse or the park.

The general area of the park, occupying ver six hundred hectares will include secons with plants from the republics of the oviet Union, America, Asia and Australia.

A bird's-eye view of the Botanical Garden ill disclose a life-size panorama in every ade and colour of the flora of the whole orld. It will tell the story of how the riches f Nature are changed and subordinated to ne will of man.

The trees and flowers of this garden will ever know the sufferings of the beautiful alm in Garshin's story.

ASKANIA-NOVA

Prairies, boundless, unlimited prairies. . . In the middle of the prairie there is a wonderful little oasis. Crystal clear artesian water falls with a ripple into the lakes and ponds with yellow-beak swans and geese from the Nile. The thick grass almost conceals flocks of African ostriches. Herds of wild jungle horses rush by, their rich manes flowing.

Is this Australia, America, or Asia?

No. It is the south of the Ukraine, the Askania-Nova reservation. This remarkable world of nature grew in the dry part of the Southern steppes. It was created by Russian scientists working at the Institute for Hybridization and Acclimatization of Animals. A hundred thousand acres of virgin land in the steppes was allotted for scientific purposes.

While the great Russian horticulturist Ivan Michurin was changing the world of vegetation, scientists of Askania-Nova were perfecting the animal kingdom. By crossing the ure with the bison they obtained a new species—the ure-bison. The Przhevalsky horse and the zebra formed a strong, obedient, bright-coloured animal, given the name of zebroid.

An important victory was the creation of a new breed of sheep —the Askania Ramboullier.

Karakul is the skin of three-day yearlings. The skin of a five-day old lamb is not considered of the first quality. Karakul sheep seldom produce more than one lamb, while the demand for the fur is colossal. Scientists remembered the Russian Romanov sheep which has a rough coat, but is very prolific. The lamb was crossed with the Karakul breed, and thus a new breed of prolific Karakul sheep was brought into existence.

Experiments were also conducted with cattle and pigs. The so-called white pig of the steppes possesses high productivity and stamina and is quick to grow. It was bred by the Askania scientists.

When war invaded the peaceful life of the reservation, the Germans drove their tanks into Askania woods and virgin steppes and shot at bisons, antelopes, and zebras from machine guns. In place of the artesian wells, power station, laboratories and "Scientific Town" the Hitlerites left charred logs, shell craters and decaying carcasses of animals.

One year has passed since reconstruction started. In place of the ruins there are thirty-eight new houses still smelling of paint. The first power station is already in operation and the Askania colony has light again. Breeding farms are coming to life. Herds of sheep, cows and pigs have appeared in the steppes. Those inhabitants of Askania-Nova who have withstood the German invasion once more feel secure.

One of the three ostriches, miraculously preserved, passed us, and hurriedly swallowed a dozen potatoes. His attention was attracted by a chip of red brick. He swallowed the brick. Then loudly clapping his wings he flew to his nest, chased the female ostrich off and took her place.

Larks were fluttering in the feather grass, and a quail was making its peculiar noise not far from us.

The tall steppe grass was stretching to the sun. Life is victorious.

THE DARWIN MUSEUM

Transporting us back to the dim past, the stocky brawny cave people of the Stone Age stand before us in the museum bearing the name of the great naturalist Darwin. They are the work of the sculptor Vatagin.

Pictures hung on the walls take you into the pre-glacial period when the heat of the sun was stronger and brighter than today and the earth was covered by an impenetrable forest. In these jungles lived strange quadrupeds with an oblong skull and a soft wide nose. These were the forebears of the ancient mastodonts—predecessors of the modern elephant. There are elephants too—African and Indian ones. Behind the elephants there is a plaster-of-Paris model of an animal which may be taken at first glance for a colossal bear. This is the effigy of the megaterium which disappeared from the face of the earth long, long ago. The megaterium is represented in life-size. Young Darwin found his bones in South America and the find gave him the first idea of the possibility that species changed.

An excursion to the State Darwin Museum reveals to the visitor what a great variety of animals Nature created. Here, clutching at the branches of a tree, hangs the grey-black gorilla, a species on the road to extinction. There, as though he has just come from the rush growth, stands a tiger, pricking up his ears. Tall graceful giraffes, powerful lions, striped zebras, long-legged ostriches, multi-coloured peacocks—all parade before the visitor in the halls of the museum.

Half a century ago a Russian zoologist, Alexander Kots, started a small collection of birds. It took up a few shelves of a glass chest. In 1896 the future Professor received the Silver Medal for his collection at the exhibition of the "Russian society of acclimatization of animals and plants". This date is now considered to be the foundation of the Darwin Museum.

The museum possesses a valuable collection of colour variations of bears, wolves, lynxes, gluttons and other animals whose fur is used commercially. There are all the shades from white to black. In order to select thirty bearskins for the collection Professor Kots had to look through eight thousand skins. Such extraordinary possibilities are given to the museum by the state fur organization "Soyuzpushnina" to whose warehouses millions of various skins come from all parts of the country.

The museum is always informed about any unusual finds. Among the most rare exhibits there is the skin of a black lynx from the Urals forests, the only skin of its kind in Europe.

The Darwin Museum owns a collection of bird rarities. These were chosen out of two hundred million normally coloured bird and number several hundred species. O may see here such rarities as a white rav and albino eagles. There are only three stu fed albino eagles in the museums of Europ two of them in the Darwin Museum.

The museum has a colossal collection giant tropical butterflies. No jewel of t finest craftsmanship may be compared wi these extraordinary creations of Nature. T sparkling wings of the butterfly glisten li precious stones.

The museum rooms remind one of Noah Arc. Leopards from Sumatra, Abyssinia a the Transcaucasus, pink flamingoes, Japane roosters with two yard tails, the paradi bird, whose head is decorated with two my terious horns with thirty-two feathery fla each—all this is of great interest to scienc

The man who gave half a century to p all this together, is Professor Alexander Kot the founder and permanent director of t Darwin Museum.

A VISIT TO "COMRADE F."

The war communiqués of the Soviet Info mation Bureau, describing the activities Soviet partisans, often made mention of mysterious "Comrade *F*".

At that time only a chosen few knew tha this initial concealed Alexei Fyodorov, lea er of one of the largest Ukrainian partisa units. "Comrade F's" partisans fought i the impassable Bryansk woods, in the Che nigov and Volyn areas. They were at the hee of German troops, harassing them da and night.

The whole of the Ukraine was afire wit partisan warfare. The people's avengers cu enemy communications, blew up bridges, co trolled highways, derailed trains which ro led into ditches. Fyodorov's battle deeds a highly estimated: two gold stars of the Her of the Soviet Union decorate his tunic.

We visited Alexei Fyodorov in the Hote "Moskva". The noise of a busy town came i from the sunlit windows of his suite. A stock dark man with a long Cossack moustache rose to greet us.

Fyodorov's other visitor was camerama Mikhail Glieder, who was during the wa among Fyodorov's partisans and shot scenes o partisan battles. Now he had brought a larg album of photographs as a gift for his forme commander.

The partisan told us that he is now work ing on a trilogy depicting the chief stages o the partisan struggle in the Ukraine. Th first part *Communists Underground* is fin ished.

BERING'S GUNS FOUND

Fur traders hunting on the Bering Islan found metal objects protruding out of th water of one of the bays. After the tide wen out the find proved to be two cannons from th "St. Peter" frigate. They had lain in the san of the Bering Island for over two hundre years.

A Russian expedition, headed by the prominent explorer of the time of Peter the Great, Virus Bering (1680-1741), suffered shipwreck on the frigate "St. Peter" in 1741. The crew landed on a desolate island, later given the name of Bering. Here the famous explorer and many of his companions died of disease. Those sailors who remained alive built a small boat, and reached the coast of Kamchatka.

Soviet geographers frequently visited Bering's Island, attempting to find the place where the Russian expedition hibernated. A few years ago one of the guns from the "St. Peter" was found on the island. Later an expedition of the museum of the Pacific fleet found a hut dug in the earth. It contained many articles used on ships. The new find is a valuable addition to the material which reconstructs the history of Bering's expedition.

A STUDENT'S CONCERT

A girl appears on the platform and announces that a literary concert by the students of the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages is about to begin. All the artists are first-year students of the Institute—future translators from the English and French languages. The programme is made up of dramatic fragments and scenes: dramatized versions of the *Pickwick Papers*, *Tom Sawyer*, Galsworthy's *Dark Flower*, some fragments by Anatole France and other well-known European and American writers.

The young people's achievements in their chosen branches of study are highly creditable. In some a sound knowledge of language is combined with unmistakeable talent for the stage.

THE VICTORY VASE

A handsome gift has been presented to Stalin by the workers of the Leningrad Porcelain Factory—a China vase named *Victory*. The vase is 2.5 metres in height and has a diameter of 71 centimetres. Among the largest existent China vases preserved in the State Hermitage Museum at Leningrad, is a vase manufactured in the Petersburg factory in 1828, and measuring 2.22 metres, and a 1.30 metre Sevres vase, with decorative moulding dating from the latter quarter of the 18th century.

Work on the *Victory* vase was started in 1944. The artists, engineers and technologists of the factory used their skill and experience to produce a *Victory* vase worthy of its name and destination. In the centre is a portrait of Generalissimo Stalin in a golden wreath of laurel. On the back is a picture of the gun salvo fired on the Neva on Victory Day, May 9th, 1945. The lower portion carries six medallions with episodes from the Great Patriotic War. On golden scrolls are inscribed words from Stalin's Victory Day message to the people. Engraved on the stem of the vase are groups symbolizing the unity of the Soviet front and rear in the war days.

The *Victory vase may* be seen at the Tretyakov Gallery at Moscow.

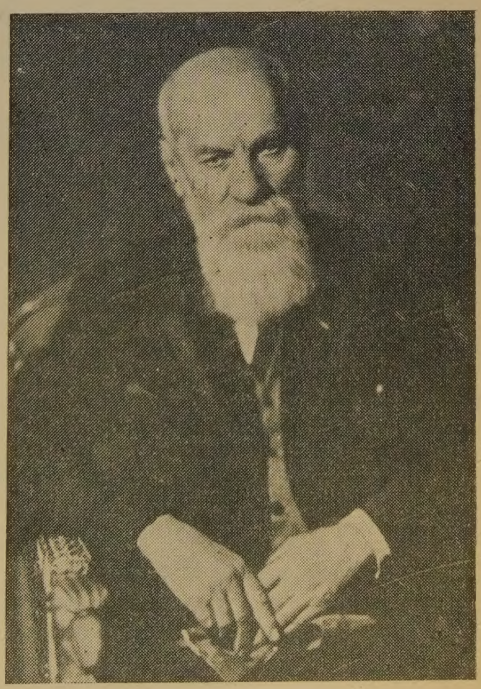
ALEXEI BACH

The death of Academician Alexei Bach, the eminent chemist and an outstanding figure in public life, is a grievous loss for Soviet science.

Alexei Bach who was in his ninetieth year at the time of his death, was the founder of biochemical science in the U.S.S.R.; the author of important researches in the fields of the chemism of respiratory processes, fermentative phenomena and the nitrogen and carbon cycle in nature.

In his long and fruitful lifetime, constructive scientific labour was harmoniously united with his social-political activities. At the age of sixteen, when he was still at school, Bach joined the Russian revolutionary movement. As a student of twenty-one he was deported for participation in university disturbances in Kiev. On his return from exile he developed vigorous revolutionary activities, organizing illegal circles, doing propaganda work and printing proclamations. During this period he wrote a book of economic essays entitled *Tsar-Famine* which did much to popularize revolutionary ideas in the country.

In 1885 Bach emigrated to Paris where he took up serious scientific work. For several years he conducted researches in the laboratory directed by Professor Schutzenberger, a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences. In 1891, Bach left for the United States where he introduced his improved method of fermentation into American factories. Later he settled down in Switzerland. In a modest laboratory he set up near Geneva he conducted important experimentation and research work in biological chemistry, in recognition



Academician Alexei Bach

of which he was elected Honorary Doctor of Chemistry by the University of Lausanne.

After the 1917 Revolution Bach returned to his native land where he took an active part in the scientific, technical and industrial life of the country. He was permanent director of the Physico-Chemical Institute organized by himself which grew to be the main theoretical centre of the Soviet chemical industry. In 1935 Bach organized an Institut of Biochemistry under the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences which bears his name. A membe of the Academy of Sciences since 1929, and Academician-Secretary of the Department o Chemical Sciences from 1939, he conducted important work in the organization of scien tific activities which considerably promoted the progress of scientific research in Soviet chemical institutes.

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